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Middleton

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Middleton

THE
MISCELLANEOUS
WORKS

Of the late REVEREND and LEARNED

CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.

Principal Librarian of the University of *Cambridge*.

In FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON,

Printed for R. MANBY in the *Old Bailey*, near
Ludgate-bill; and H. S. Cox in *Pater-noster Row*.

MDCCLV.

1904
1905
1906

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SECOND VOLUME.

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REMARKS

REMARKS

ON

TWO PAMPHLETS

Lately published against

Dr. Middleton's Introductory Discourse.

The ONE, intituled,
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the Author's Prejudices, &c.

The OTHER,
The JESUIT-CABAL farther opened,

OR
A Defence of Dr. *Chapman's* late Charge, &c.

With a PREFACE to these REMARKS,
Giving a brief Account of a certain Book, which
professes to exhibit a full, true, and compre-
hensive View of CHRISTIANITY, &c.

As it was taught and practised by the Universal Church,
during the first Four CENTURIES.

With some occasional Reflections on the said Book.

VOL. II.

A

P R Æ F A C E.

I Have lately met with a certain book, which, though written without any reference to Dr. *Middleton's Introductory Discourse*, and with a view quite opposite to it, is yet so particularly connected with the subject of it, and consequently, with the present debate, which is grounded upon it, that I have thought it necessary, on this occasion, to give the reader a short abstract of it, as a proper preface or introduction to the following remarks.

The purpose of it, as it is declared by the Title-page, is, "To give a true and comprehensive view of Christianity: or to set forth the complete duty of a Christian, in relation to faith, practice, worship, and rituals, without regard to any modern Church, Sect, or Party; as it is taught in the holy Scriptures, was delivered by the Apostles, and received by the universal Church of Christ during *the first four centuries*. The whole laid down in two Catechisms; the first, for the use of Children; the second, of more knowing Christians."

Now when a controversy was actually on foot, concerning the principles and characters of the primitive Fathers; and a quæstion moved among Divines, whether they were the most favorable to the Popish or to the Protestant cause, nothing could come out more apposite to the purpose, or more effectual towards the decision of it, than a performance of this kind; setting forth by a deduction of facts and instances, what were the genuin doctrines and practices of those antient Fathers, during *the four first centuries* of the Christian Church. This book therefore I would recommend to the attention of the reader: For this will inable him to judge, of the real merit of *the Introductory Discourse*, which has been attacked and decried by several writers, and especially by these two, with whom I am now engaged.

The Author of these Catechisms, appears to be a man of sense and learning; warmly persuaded of the truth and importance of what he delivers; and delivering it with much piety and gravity, and with more candor, than we commonly observe in writers of his zeal and principles. The plan also of Christianity, which he has proposed to us, seems to be a fair and just representation of the discipline of the primitive Church, or of such a part at least, as he thinks fit to recommend to the practice of the present age. And if we grant him his main principle,

principle, that *unwritten tradition*, as it is exemplified by the universal practice of the ancient Fathers and Churches, is of *Apostolic Origin*, we must grant likewise, that all the rites and doctrines, which he has deduced from it, are the essential parts of the Christian religion, and of equal obligation with the Gospel itself. Yet on the whole, this learned, candid, and pious performance will be found, upon examination, to confirm every thing, that Dr. *Middleton* has any where said, concerning the danger of adopting the discipline of those primitive ages, as a pattern or rule of duty to Protestants.

His scheme in general is this : that true religion consists, in believing and practising every thing, which God has revealed to us, either *by his written word or unwritten tradition*; both which are known to be God's word by the evidence of the Catholic Church [1]. He declares tradition to be, *that sacred depositum of doctrine and practice, which was delivered by Christ to the Apostles; by the Apostles to the first Bishops; and by them, to their successors and Priests, of the universal Church, from age to age* [2]. That all points of doctrine and discipline, which were *anciently and universally received by Christians, without any known beginning, have always been looked upon as Apostolic traditions*: that *this consentient practice of the Catholic Church, is the test, by which true traditions are distinguished from false* [3], that these

[1] P. 151.

[2] 142.

[3] 152.

vi P R Æ F A C E.

traditions may be called *the common law of the Church*; and the decrees of councils, *it's statute law*: and that no Church can be rightly constituted, *which does not observe them, or has any laws contradictory to them* [1].

He defines the Church to be, *the Society of all the faithful, who profess to serve God, according to that true religion, which God himself taught, and which they received from their fore-fathers, and have faithfully preserved without alteration*: that the marks of the true Church are four; it is *one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic*; preserving the doctrine of the Apostles, by a continued succession of Pastors, derived originally from them [2]. Which succession we know to have

[1] P. 191, 192.

[2] 161, 162.

These are the same marks of the true Church, which the Papists have always alledged against the Protestants, as being found in their Church, and not in any Protestant Church. Thus in a short treatise on this very subject, published by an able Popish writer, in the beginning of *Q. Elizabeth's* reign, and when the settlement of religion was under the deliberation of the parliament, the author concludes his argument in these words: "To be short, the Church of Protestants is

" not *One*, for lack of one
 " head: not *Holy*, for lack
 " of benefits: not *Catholic*,
 " because it hath not indured
 " at all times, places, and
 " persons: not *Apostolic*, be-
 " cause they cannot shew
 " their succession from the A-
 " postles downward, nor can
 " go upward lineally to the
 " Apostles, which thing is
 " plain. Therefore the Church
 " called Papistical, having
 " one head, the Pope, hav-
 " ing benefits of God, by
 " flourishing, and miracles,
 " being spread at all times,
 " in all places, through all
 " persons, that is to say, for
 been

been uninterrupted, from the times of the Apostles down to the present [1]: that if it should ever once fail, it would be impossible to renew it, without the miraculous interposition of Christ himself: for if the whole Christian world should unite their suffrages together, they could not give any authority, to offer the sacrifice of the Eucharist, or to perform any other part of the pastoral office in the Church, it being a power which Christ has reserved to himself [2].

That this universal Church, as it is now militant on earth, is made up of all the particular faithful Churches, of each of which the Bishop is the visible head. *That a particular faithful Church consists of a rightful Bishop, with his Clergy and laity united to him, professing the true faith, without the addition of false doctrine, and practising the necessary Christian worship, without corruption.* Hence flows the necessity of living and dying in the communion of the Church, out of which salvation is not ordinarily to be had. For we cannot be united to Christ, *without communicating with the holy Catholic Church, and the only means of communicating with the Catholic Church, is, by being members of a particular faithful Church* [3].

" the most part, being able	" lief, saying, I believe the
" to shew their pedigree, even	" Holy Catholic Church."
" to the Apostles, without	See <i>Strype's Annals of Q. E.</i>
" any interruption; that	<i>lix.</i> Append. p. 36.
" Church, I say, is the only	[1] P. 151.
" true Church, whereof we	[2] 282.
" make mention in our Be-	[3] 162.

To this general view of his primary and fundamental principles, I shall now add a summary account of the chief articles of that pure and primitive Christianity, which he has built upon them.

To begin then with the sacraments. In the office of Baptism, he prescribes, as necessary to the due administration of it, all the same ceremonies, which are now actually practised by the *Romish* Church, though with some little alteration, or the addition rather of more foppery and superstition, than is to be found even in the *Poppish* ritual. The person, to be baptised, must in the first place be *exorcised* by the Priest, by *blowing thrice upon his face, signing him with the sign of the Cross, and pronouncing a certain form of authoritative words, commanding the Devil to depart out of him.* He next makes a *solemn renunciation of the Devil; and a vow of perpetual obedience to Christ:* in which renunciation, *he must turn his face to the West, as being opposite to the region of light, and representing the Prince of darkness, whom he renounces:* but in making his vow to Christ, he must *turn again to the East, where Paradise was planted, which is now again laid open to him:* then he must be *anointed on the head and shoulders with holy oil, consecrated for that purpose by the Bishop,* to enable him to *wrestle the more successfully with the Devil:* then he is to be *plunged three times under water;*
onc'

once at the name of each person of the blessed Trinity; to represent the faith into which he is baptized; and also the three days burial of Christ, and his resurrection on the third day; with several other mystical senses, there specified: after this, he must be anointed again with holy Chrism, or a compound of oil and balm, consecrated by the Bishop; and is to be clothed with a white garment, the emblem of that purity to which he has devoted his life: then he receives the kiss of peace, in token of his incorporation into the Church: and lastly is made to taste of consecrated milk and honey, to denote his spiritual infancy, and his entrance into the land of rest, of which Canaan, the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey, was a type [1].

As to the Eucharist, the *true and full notion of it*, he says, is this; that it is *a religious feast upon bread, and wine mixed with water, which have first been offered in sacrifice to God, and are become the mysterious body and blood of Christ* [2]. He affirms it to be, a *real and proper sacrifice*; and calls sacrifice in general, the *most perfect, efficacious, and honorable service*, that we can pay to God [3]; and the particular sacrifice of the Eucharist, *the most excellent worship, which God ever prescribed to men* [4]: which by its *purgative and expiatory nature procures a general remission of sin for the whole Church, and atones like-*

[1] P. 227, &c. 232.

[2] P. 240.

[3] P. 250.

[4] P. 240, 279.

wise for the wilful transgressions of particular sinners: of which sacrifice, Christ, at the time of the institution, consecrated his Apostles to be the Priests, with a power of consecrating others to succeed them, and carry on the same Priesthood to the end of the world [1].

The sacramental part of the Eucharist, is the Feast upon this sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ; which being offered to God upon the Altar by the Priest, is consumed afterwards in common by the Priest and People by eating and drinking; for it was made too holy a thing by its consecration, to be treated as the ancient sacrifices were, or to be laid on the fire in whole or in part, but was to be consumed intirely, in the most honorable manner, that is, to be eaten and drunk by the faithful, in an act of most solemn devotion. He declares, that as Christ, by the words of the institution, made the bread and the cup to be his body and blood, in type and figure, so God, by his acceptance of this most excellent sacrifice, caused the Holy Spirit to give it the highest degree of sanctity, of which any sacrifice is capable, and to make it the very body and blood of Christ, in real power and energy, and to all intents and purposes of religion, or as far as it was possible for one thing to be made another, without changing the substance. And this he says, was the certain and universal belief of the Ancients, that as the natural body of Christ was formed in the womb of the

[1] P. 267, 268, 270.

blessed

bleſſed Virgin, by the overſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt, ſo, by the operation of the ſame Spirit, the bread and the cup were made his body and blood in a more eſſectual manner, than as mere representatives [1].

He affirms alſo, that the contents of the Euchariftic cup, muſt neceſſarily be wine, *mixed with water*; and employs four intire chapters, to prove this mixture to be *of divine inſtitution*; and that it was the univerſal doctrine of the Catholic Church, for above 1500 years, *that our Saviour practiſed, inſtituted and commanded the mixed cup; and made water therefore, as well as wine, an eſſential ingredient* [2]. Laſtly, he largely and ſtrongly inſiſts on the duty and neceſſity of *Infant-communion*, or of bringing all infants, even of the tendereſt age, to partake of this ſacrifice: which he enforces by a ſimilar practice both of the *Jews* and Gentiles, and the parity of thoſe arguments, which are alledged for Infant-baptiſm; and, above all, by the conſtant practice of the primitive Church through the three firſt centuries, which he deduces very particularly in ſeveral diſtinct chapters [3]. After the celebration of the Eucharift, he recommends the revival of the *Agape*, or *Love-feaſt* of the primitive Chriſtians; which was a common entertainment, provided out of the voluntary oblations of the richer communicants, in order to feed the poorer: and was held, he ſays, *for*

[1] P. 285, 296, 297. [2] 315, &c. [3] 367.
above

above three centuries and an half, within the Church; and tho' prohibited afterwards in Churches, continued still to be held in private houses; as an useful and laudable rite, and not onely of Apostolic origin, but of great service to the Christian Church [1].

To these two sacraments of the Gospel, the Church of *Rome* has added *five*, but this Protestant Catechist, *ten*; which he calls *lesser Sacraments*. Five of them belonging to Baptism; *Exorcism, anointing with oil, the white garment, a taste of milk and honey, and the unction by holy Chrism*: the other five are, *the sign of the Cross, Imposition of hands, the Unction of the sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony* [2]. The three last of these are held also as sacraments by the *Romish* Church, together with *confirmation* and *penance*, but instead of *confirmation*, this writer introduces, *imposition of hands*, which they call the *outward sign of it*: and though he does not make a sacrament of *Penance*, yet he enjoins it, as a necessary duty to all Christians; with private confession also to a Priest, which the *Romanists* reckon, as the outward sign of it [3]. And in truth, all his *lesser sacraments*, are nothing else but so many *Papish* ceremonies, now actually practised by that Church; which, upon the authority of tradition and the primitive Fathers, he declares to be so essential, that *it is not in the power of the universal Church, to alter or lay*

[1] P. 393.

[2] 224.

[3] 410, &c.

them

them aside [1]. And as to the sign of the Cross, tho' the *Romanists* make use of it in all their Sacraments, and prescribe it likewise in all the offices of private life, declaring it, as this author also does, to have wrought many miracles, yet Popish superstition never reached so far, as to advance it to a Sacrament.

As to the other parts of our worship due to God, he prescribes a constant attendance on the public and daily service of the Church, *every morning and evening, and on the penitential offices, peculiar to Wednesdays and Fridays*; which appear, he says, *from Tradition, to have been days appointed for divine worship by the Apostles, as well as Sundays*. And besides these stated times, he requires us to attend also devoutly, *on the public prayers of the Church at Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination; at Matrimony, the Churcking of women, and burial of the dead; at the consecration of oil, the milk, the honey and the Chrism; and at all the other benedictions, and Ecclesiastical prayers*, which are said over different persons and things on different occasions: because all these Offices were composed by great saints, out of the words of scripture, and preserved by antient tradition, and designed to sanctify all our actions, and use of all the creatures.

As to our private devotions and prayers, besides the morning and night, he prescribes a repetition of them, *every third hour of the day; at*

[1] P. 195.

nine.

*nine in the forenoon, twelve at noon, and three in the afternoon; as being the fixed times of performing them, during the three first centuries: and he recommends it to those zealous Christians of heroic piety, who would imitate holy David, Paul, and Silas, to extend their devotion also to the third hour of the night: according to which division of the day and night into equal spaces of three hours each, all the returning times of prayer have acquired the following Latin names in the Romish Church; Prime or Matins, in the morning: Tierce, at nine, or the third hour: Sexte, at noon, or the sixth hour: None, at three, or the ninth hour: Vespers, at six, in the evening: Compline, at nine at night: Nocturns, at midnight: and Lauds, at three in the morning, or the time of Cock-crowing. To which Heroic pitch of devotion, as he calls it, no Christians of these later days have had the presumption to aspire, or the honor to reach, except some Monkish orders of the Popish Church, or a few wild Enthusiasts, or crafty zealots, heroically ambitious of the honor of a Saintship. But to give some ease however under so laborious a devotion, to Christians especially engaged in business, he observes, that, if they frequent the public offices of the Church, *their devotions at these hours may be very short; and proposes to them the sign of the Cross, made with this form of words, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen: as the shortest and most significant of all prayers: because we confess by it, the mystery of the**

Trinity;

Trinity; and, by the motion of our hand, express the figure of the Cross, or the mystery of our redemption, with that also of the incarnation, on which it depends [1]. Lastly, in the act of praying, whether public or private, he directs us, to turn our faces towards the East, according to antient tradition, and adds several reasons, which were alledged for it by the Primitive Fathers [2].

He affirms likewise, upon the same authority, the duty of *praying for the faithful deceased*: that *as the Saints in Paradise pray for us, so we ought to pray for all those, who departed in the faith*, but cannot attain the completion of their happiness, 'till the final day of judgement. That we should pray even *for the forgiveness of their sins*: for their present separate state being the consequence and punishment of Sin, and a state of imperfection, in which the soul is capable of improvement, it follows, *that prayers and alms and Eucharistic sacrifices offered for them in the Church, may increase the blessedness of their intermediate state, and prevail for the abatement of those rigors, which they might otherwise suffer in the conflagration of the last day [3].*

All these sacramental rites and offices of devotion, which I have hitherto recited, are deduced by him from what he calls, *the common law of the Church*; that is, the practice and custom of primitive Antiquity: but he has col-

[1] P. 175.

[2] 176.

[3] 164.

lected also from its *Statute-law*, or the decrees of Councils, *six particular Commands of the Church*, as he calls them, which he enjoins to all Christians, as of equal obligation.

The first command is, *to abstain from eating blood*. Which he declares to have been observed by the *holy Church throughout the world, even to the tenth century*; and that it is laid upon all Christians, *by the law of God, and the tradition and Canons of the primitive Church, to eat of no animal, but what is so killed, that the blood of it may be naturally poured out* [1].

The second is, *to offer to God our tithes, first fruits, and voluntary oblations*. This he calls *a necessary branch of divine worship*, and declares, that God had appropriated to himself *our tithes*, or the tenth part of our substance, *from the beginning of the world: and that the oblation of our first fruits is commanded also by the Holy Ghost*, and in all religions, ages, and countries of the world, was ever esteemed a part of divine worship. But besides *our tithes and first fruits*, which are due by the divine law, God expects from us also *voluntary oblations*; in the measure of which however he leaves us at our liberty; yet the more we offer, the more acceptably we serve him. These are to be paid to his servants and receivers, the Priests; tho' not for their own use, but to be deposited in the hands of the Bi-

shop, as a *standing treasury*, for the support of the Church, the maintenance of the Clergy, and the relief of the poor, of which the Bishop is to have the disposal, as being Christ's vicar, the prime steward of God's revenues, and the chief master of his household [1].

The third is, *to observe the Festivals of the Church*. These are divided into the greater and lesser. The greater are, *Easter-day, the first Sunday after Easter, Ascension-day, Whit-sunday, all the Sundays of the year and Christmas day* [2]. The lesser are, *all the days between Easter and Whitsunday, except Sundays: in which we solemnize our Saviour's resurrection for fifty days successively, during which time all fasts are suspended, and we are to pray standing, as on Sundays, in token of joy, and thereby make every one of these days equal in a manner to Sundays. All Saturdays or Sabbaths likewise, except that before Easter, are lesser Feasts, having been sanctified by God from the creation of the world, and in memory of that, continued to be observed by the primitive Christians, as Festivals of devotion. Monday also and Tuesday after Whitsunday, the Circumcision, Epiphany, the Purification and Annuntiation of the blessed Virgin, and all the other Saints days, marked in our present Calendars, are in the number of his lesser Festivals* [3].

The fourth is, *to observe the Fasts of the Church*: which are divided also into the greater

[1] P. 205.
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[2] 208.
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[3] 209.
and

and lesser. The greater are *holy Saturday, or the day before Easter*; which the Primitive Christians kept with a *vigil and Pernoctation*, in memory of our Lord's resurrection, which happened early the next morning; about which time they expected also his second coming. The next Fast in strictness is *Good Friday*, the preceding day; on which our Lord was crucified. But the primitive Church joined them both together, as *one Fast of forty hours, and kept it as an Evangelic command*. The other greater Fasts are the *other four preceding days of the same week before Easter*, as preparatory to the more strict and solemn observance of *Good Friday and Holy Saturday*. The lesser Feasts are, *the Stations, and Lent*. The *Stations* are, *all the Wednesdays and Fridays of the Year*; being weekly commemorations, of our Lord's being sold by Judas on Wednesday, and crucified on Friday; and are called *Stations*, in allusion to military stations and keeping guard. The use of these Fasts is, to punish ourselves for our sins, by suffering hunger and thirst, depriving ourselves of our pleasures, and even of a part of our necessary nourishment. For by mortifying of the flesh and weakening the body, we mortify the mind, and dispose it the better for prayer, compunction, and serious thoughts [1].

The fifth is, to offer and receive the Eucharist, on every holy day; at least, on all the greater Festivals: which relaxation the Church indulged, he says, that she might secure a weekly celebration

[1] P. 210.

of it on all Sundays, besides the Ascension and Christmas-days: which is the least, that is required of all Christians, both by scripture and tradition: and those, who wilfully omit it on the Lord's day, do virtually excommunicate themselves for a time [1].

The sixth command of the Church is, *to pray standing on all Sundays, and on every day, between Easter and Whitsunday*, out of respect and remembrance of our Lord's resurrection, which was observed by all Churches, from the beginning, on the authority of *Apostolic tradition*, and especially enforced, by the 20th Canon of the first great Council of Nice, A. D. 325. the posture of kneeling is adapted onely to occasions of humiliation and penitential devotion, but that of standing, he says, *is a beautiful symbolic representation of our Lord's resurrection*; proper to raise our thoughts from the earth, and to unite them more closely with God, and the things above: and no ceremony of the Church can be more efficacious for the purpose of elevating the mind, and inflaming the affections, and stirring up the faculties of the soul [2].

As to the honors which were paid to *the Martyrs* by the Primitive Churches, he informs us, "that their *reliques or the remains of their bodies* were carefully preserved and embalmed. "and wrapped up in rich cloaths, and the very "drops of their blood gathered up. That, on

[1] P. 217.

[2] 219.

“ the days of their Martyrdoms, the Christians
 “ use to meet together, to celebrate their me-
 “ mories and honor their nativity, as they called
 “ it, or their entrance into eternal life : that
 “ they made these days Festivals, like Sundays,
 “ and assembled at their Tombs, to thank God
 “ for their example, and to excite one another to
 “ imitate it, by reading their acts, and the histo-
 “ ry of their sufferings : and that God worked
 “ miracles at their Tombs, and often at their
 “ Martyrdoms, by which several persons present
 “ and even their executioners and Judges had
 “ sometimes been converted [1].”

His account likewise of the origin of Monke-
 ry, in the primitive ages, is this, “ that from the
 “ beginnings of Christianity, there were certain
 “ persons in the Church, called *Ascetics*, who,
 “ from a desire of attaining to a greater per-
 “ fection, than that of common Christians, pro-
 “ fessed to exercise themselves in great austeri-
 “ ties, after the example of *John Baptist*. These
 “ exercises were, to abstain wholly from flesh and
 “ wine ; to fast for two or three days succe-
 “ sively ; to spend their time chiefly in devo-
 “ tion ; to give up themselves and their sub-
 “ stance to the service of God and the use of the
 “ poor and distressed, confining themselves to a
 “ single life, and making themselves Eunuchs for
 “ the kingdom of Heaven, inuring themselves
 “ to great hardships, watchings, sleeping on the

[1] P. 146.

I

“ ground,

“ground, for the promotion of piety and
 “religion: all which severities were volun-
 “tary, and exercised without any compulsive
 “rules.

“But about the middle of the third century,
 “in a time of persecution, great numbers, to
 “avoid the fury of it, fled into the deserts of
 “*Ægypt*, where they employed themselves in
 “acts of piety, and divine contemplations; and
 “found that sort of life so agreeable, that when
 “the persecution ceased, they chose to continue
 “still in that solitary state, whence they came
 “to be called *Monks*. They lived at first in lit-
 “tle cells or cottages, which they built for them-
 “selves: but towards *the middle of the fourth*
 “*century they were* brought to live in communi-
 “ties, and under rules by *St. Pachomius*; who
 “procured Monasteries to be built for them
 “about *Thebais*: and many holy persons, who
 “were desirous to keep up the exact practice of
 “the Christian religion, which they saw declin-
 “ing, chose this kind of life. They spent their
 “time in manual labor, and in meditating on
 “the holy scripture; fasted every day ’till to-
 “wards the evening, and then seldom tasted any
 “thing more, than bread and water: they as-
 “sembled together to pray at the evening and
 “in the night; slept little, kept a profound
 “silence, practised all sorts of virtues, and lived
 “in perfect obedience to their superiors, though
 “there were sometimes *several thousands of*
 “them

“ *them* under one Governor, for in a short time
 “ they multiplied exceedingly [1].

“ From the same beginnings and in the same
 “ manner, were formed also the primitive socie-
 “ ties of *religious virgins or nuns* ; who practised
 “ the same austerities, of *silence, poverty, watch-*
 “ *ings, and continual prayer* : and there were se-
 “ veral saints, who drew up rules for the Mo-
 “ nastic life of both the sexes ; which soon
 “ spread through all Christendom ; for *St.*
 “ *Martin of Tours* brought it into *France in the*
 “ *fourth century* ; and *Pelagius* is supposed to
 “ have brought it into *England, about the begin-*
 “ *ning of the fifth* [2].”

From this short sketch of the Christian duties, deduced at large by this author, from the united authority of *Scripture and tradition*, the reader will easily perceive, what would be the consequence, of admitting them, as a *rule of faith and practice to Protestants*.

For in the first place ; the necessity of a Priesthood, derived by a lineal descent from the Apostles, if acknowledged by all Christians, as it is affirmed by this writer, would create incurable disorders in all Protestant communities. According to this principle, if the Priesthood should once fail, the whole Christian worship would be dissolved at once, without the possibility of a renewal, but by a new commission or

[1] P. 147. [2] 149.

revelation

revelation from heaven. Now *this uninterrupted succession of Priests* is allowed to the Church of Rome, but denied by many to the Church of England, and not so much as pretended to, by any other Church or Sect of Protestants: among whom consequently, neither the Christian Sacraments, nor any part of the pastoral office can be administered, without a sacrilegious profanation, and impious defiance of Christ himself. How forcibly then would any scruples of this kind operate on weak and religious minds, towards driving them into the arms of that Church, in which alone, they could be sure of receiving the absolution of their sin, from the hands of an Apostolic Confessor.

Secondly, From this plan of primitive Christianity we may observe, how tradition, instead of serving to that use, which is more peculiarly ascribed to it, of adding light and illustration to the obscurer parts of the gospel, serves onely to perplex and obscure it the more, by multiplying quæstions, ingrafting new doctrines upon it, clogging it with tiresome ceremonies, and converting it from a rational, to a ritual, service. The article of *the Eucharist* will confirm this reflection. Our Lord's institution of it, as it is related by all the Evangelists, is comprized in a few words, in which he prescribes *a solemn and religious commemoration of his death and sufferings*, to be perpetually observed in his Church: the frequent celebration of

which, by a natural tendency and effect, could not fail to excite, in all his faithful disciples, a warm affection and zeal for the memory of their Master, and confirm their resolutions of living conformably to his precepts. But tradition is no sooner called in, to the interpretation of it, than it envelopes it presently in clouds of mystic darkness; transforms it into *a proper and propitiatory sacrifice, offered for the dead, as well as the living*; declares the materials of it, the bread and wine, as soon as consecrated by the Priest, to be no longer mere representatives, or types of Christ's body and blood, but converted, by the operation of the holy Spirit, into the same thing with Christ himself, in power and energy, and to all intents and purposes of religion, tho' in mystery, not in substance. It mingles the Eucharist cup also, with *wine and water*, tho' by the words of the institution, it appears to have had nothing in it but wine, and affirms *this mixture to be of divine appointment*, tho' there be not the least mention of it in any part of the Gospel. And, to make this sacred office still more burthenfome, it enjoins to us, as a necessary duty, to bring all infants, even of the tenderest age, to partake of it; a practice, which must needs disturb the solemnity of it, and dissipate the attention, of all who assist at it. And declares this Sacrament, not onely to be *necessary to salvation*; but *a means, by which a principle of an happy resurrection is conveyed into our bodies* [1].

[1] P. 287.

Thus

Thus the *true and full notion*, as he calls it, of *the Eucharist*, delivered originally by our Lord, within the compass of two or three verses, when dressed out in all the trimmings, with which tradition has equipped it, takes up *an hundred and fifty pages, or about eighty intire chapters of this Author's larger Catechism*. He apologizes indeed for his prolixity on this article, on the account of its importance, and *the many controversies, which have arisen about it in the Christian Church; and because the whole of our religion may fairly be summed up in it* [1]: for there is no other article, he says, *which requires more pains and study to be rightly informed in, and that to believe it is indeed a work of labor* [2]. But this very apology for the length of his doctrine, seems to be a confutation of the truth of it. For it is certain, that an institution, which cannot be explained without so much learned pains, could never be designed for the most excellent part of a worship, which was calculated for the common salvation of all men; or that tradition at least cannot be the proper interpreter of it, which makes it so difficult to be understood, that it is *a labor to believe it*.

Thirdly, We may observe also, from this same book, what is notorious likewise in the Romish Church, that tradition, wherever it is admitted into a partnership of authority with the

[1] P. 393.

[2] p. 311.

Scriptures,

Scriptures, instead of serving as its handmaid, as some of our Divines affect to call it, has always acted the Mistress, taken the lead, and got the ascendant so far, as to eclipse the credit of the written word, reduce it as it were to a dead letter, and even banish it at last from the use of the people. Thus in *the primitive Catechism* now before us, among all the various rites and doctrines, laid down as essential to Christians, for every single one, derived immediately from the Gospel, we may reckon twenty, I dare say, deduced intirely from tradition.

Fourthly, We may now see, from a clear deduction of facts and instances, as they are set forth in this piece, how directly the authority of the primitive Fathers and their traditions tends to lead us into the Church of *Rome*: we see it ascribing a supreme and independent power to the Church; asserting the Popish sacraments; a propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's body and blood, both for the living and the dead; prayers for the dead, to procure some relief and improvement of their intermediate state; Exorcisms, Chrisms, consecrated oil, sign of the Cross, penances, confessions to a Priest, absolutions, reliques of Saints; Monks; the preference of single life to the married, as of gold to silver; in short, almost every thing, now practised or professed by the Romanists; except *the universal supremacy* of the Pope, which is disputed by the Papists themselves; *the divine worship of Saints,*

Saints, which they also disavow and endeavour to elude; and absolute transubstantiation; towards which, however, he has gone as far as he could possibly do, while he retains the name of a Protestant: but though that character obliged him, to keep as clear of Popery as he was able, yet tradition, we see, has carried him to the very confines, and prepared him as it were to step into it, whenever a proper occasion should invite. For I could never consider these plans of primitive Christianity, when published by Protestants, in any other light than as preliminary articles, offered to the Romish Church, as the ground for a treaty of peace and reconciliation, in which the few remaining points of difference might easily be accommodated. Which vain project of an union with *Rome*, has ever been the fond wish of all those zealots of our Church, who draw their religious principles from the source of primitive Antiquity.

I am a perfect stranger to the author of this piece, nor have any other knowledge of his character, than what has been signified to me by his writings, and the report of common fame. The warm expressions of piety and devotion, which run through his whole performance, oblige me to think him an honest man; as I take every one to be, who governs himself by a virtuous principle, or believes that he does so, though he be deceived in the choice, or the application of that principle. Fame also has in-

formed

formed me, that he lives up to the character, which his book points out to us : practises what he professes ; and is an example of that discipline which he prescribes to others : that he is a Protestant Priest ; yet a separatist from the communion of our Protestant Church ; disaffected to its present constitution, and consequently to the present government, on which its security depends, This is the real character which his writings suggest : this, the natural course of his principles, when frankly avowed, and pushed to their full length. Principles which, among Protestants, will ever produce the worst fruit, when they take root in the best minds ; will corrupt the purest heart ; make even the sincerity of men dangerous to society, and transform a pious, zealous Christian, into an enemy to his country.

Yet these are the principles which the *Chapmans*, the *Berrimans*, the *Stebbings*, are so zealously asserting and recommending to this Protestant Kingdom. Dr. *Chapman*, as we shall see in the following Remarks, when driven by unanswerable testimonies, to give up the character of any ancient Father, as favorable to the Popish cause, takes refuge in *the collective body of them, and the consentient practice of the primitive Churches*, as the proper *armoury*, or bulwark of Protestantism : on which same foundation, this Catechism, which I have been considering, is professedly grounded. From this therefore every one

one may now learn, what a sort of Protestantism it is, which the authority of those ancients, and the zeal of these moderns, would finally impose upon us : a Protestantism compounded of *fanatical Enthusiasm*, and *Popish Superstition* ; giving itself up to an implicit submission to Church authority ; banishing every thing rational out of its doctrine and discipline ; placing the principal service of God, in ritual observances, and Monkish devotions ; and obliged to adopt, as *Divine* or *Apostolic*, every whim and absurdity, which, through the credulity, bigotry, policy, or private interests of any leading Churchmen, had insinuated itself into the Christian worship, within the compass of the first four hundred years.

R E M A R K S

REMARKS

O N

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

UPON my first and hasty perusal of these *Anonymous Observations*, I could not help considering them as the work of some fly unbeliever, who, under the mask of zeal for the honour of the Gospel, and a pretence of fears and jealousies, from the freedom of the *Introductory Discourse*, was craftily pointing out every topic and passage of it, which, by any art or force, could be strained to the advantage of the Infidel cause.

He begins early to drop his suspicions, *that something bad lay at the bottom, which had excited the Author to this undertaking* [1]; and as he advances forward, takes occasion to declare, *that the Author must either renounce his argument or the Gospel* [2]; *that those, who believe the Fathers of the second and third Centuries to be more credulous than those of the fourth, may fancy the Apostles to have been more credulous than them all* [3]. *That if the world was so credulous, immediately after the Apostles, it will not be easy to comprehend, how it should have been much less so in the Apostles times* [4]; *that the Author's charge indeed stops*

[1] Observat. p. 5. [2] p. 18. [3] p. 18. [4] p. 23.
with

with the Fathers, but that his arguments do not stop there [1]; for if the Fathers can be proved to have been forgers of lies, the consequences may go a great way [2].

When I saw therefore an unknown writer, entering forwardly into a debate, to which he appeared to be an utter stranger; and treating the chief point of it, as a problem, which might possibly be true, yet representing it all the while as ruinous to Christianity, what else could I so naturally think of him, as that he was some Infidel in disguise, who was catching all opportunities of prompting the enemies of revelation, to lay hold on every thing, which could furnish matter of cavil or ridicule to the disadvantage of the Christian religion: for with whatever view he wrote, it is certain, that the obvious tendency of his performance is, to confirm people in Scepticism, and to suggest arguments for the defence of it.

I have since indeed been informed, that he is of a character very different from what I at first imagined: celebrated for his *polemic* writings, and eminently distinguished by his zeal and orthodox principles: and upon a stricter review of his work, I can discover many strokes, which seem to indicate a genius of that sort; an eagerness to appear the first in the dispute, though he has nothing to offer in it, but the testimony of his zeal; the art of playing an hypothesis against fact, and of eluding by a distinction,

[1] P. 24.

[2] P. 33.

what

What he cannot oppose by reasoning. Yet it puzzles me still, to consider, how such a veteran in controversy, and master of the *polemic* arts, can be so jejune and futile in the matter, and so injudicious and inconsistent in the management of his argument.

The professed design of his *Observations*, as it is signified in the very Title page, is, *to remove the prejudices of the Author of the Introductory Discourse*. But in a Discourse of that nature, formed in contradiction to opinions universally established, and religiously believed, to warn people *against the Author's prejudices*, and to attempt seriously to remove them, is in itself absurd and ridiculous. For in the present case, on which side can the weight of prejudices be supposed to lie? surely, the belief of nations, the testimony of ages, and the authority of fifteen Centuries, are the strongest prejudices, which can possibly be conceived, in favor of any controverted facts; and no contradiction can be offered to them, but under all the disadvantage and inequality, which any influence of that sort can create. If our Observator therefore had really desired, to have this question fairly examined, it should have been his first care, to remove these capital prejudices out of the way, or, at least, to moderate the force of them, by informing his readers, that if the practice and example of past ages, of what duration soever, had been thought of weight enough to over-rule all other evidence; no improvement of science, or reformation

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mation in religion, nor even Christianity itself, could ever have made its way into the world : but instead of this, the whole purpose of his book is, not to remove, but to strengthen old prejudices, and inculcate new ones in every page, against the design, the subject, and the whole composition of the *Introductory Discourse*.

He declares it to be a work, *of no use or significancy to us, either as Christians or Protestants* [1]; that it *advances nothing towards the general conclusion which it aims at, but leaves the question just as he found it* [2]; that it *quarrels with the whole stream of Christian writers, and that a candid man would not have offered such a charge to the public, without producing his evidence at the same time* [3]; that *the Fathers are in possession, and have a right to keep it, till their title be disproved* [4]. All which declarations are so many contradictions to his pretence of removing prejudices. For it is not possible, that a *Discourse of no significancy, advancing nothing, but leaving things just as it found them*, should be capable of infusing any thing prejudicial to any cause whatsoever. Yet, what is still more remarkable, he affirms *the twelve last pages of it to be nothing else, but one thorough impertinency, from the beginning to the end* [5]. This indeed is the true old way of removing prejudices, by removing whole treatises at once; and shews, what our Observer would be at; the salutary method, now

[1] P. 5, 25. [2] p. 24. [3] p. 6. [4] p. 25.
[5] p. 29. See note.

practised

practised so successfully abroad, of an *Index expurgatorius*, or what was used also formerly with equal success, at home, an *Imprimatur* by the Chaplains of our Bishops.

But what is it, after all, which makes those pages so completely impertinent and offensive to him? Why, they contain an *harangue*, he says, *on the Scriptures being the rule of faith; and a charge upon the present Clergy, of carrying the credit of Ecclesiastic Antiquity to an height, which tends to throw us again into the hands of the Romish Church.* Yet, if such an *harangue* be true, it can never be impertinent in a Protestant country; especially at a time, when Popery is allowed to be gaining ground upon us. And as to the charge, as he calls it, upon the *present Clergy*, as if it included the whole body of them, it is the exaggeration onely of a polemic writer: for though Dr. M——, the Author of that Discourse, charges the Clergy in general, with paying a greater deference to the Authority of the Fathers than is due, and much more than is paid to it by any other Protestant Church; yet in the passage here referred to, where he is speaking of principles, *now carried to a length which must needs alarm all serious Protestants*, he cannot be understood to be charging any other part, or persons of the Clergy, but those *particular Defenders of the primitive Monks and their miracles*, whose names he often mentions, and whose principles he particularly exposes, through that whole Discourse, as dangerous to the Protestant

cause: which charge he will always be ready to make good, against all, who assert, and all, who encourage and reward the Assertors of such principles.

The argument of the Introductory Discourse is formed upon a supposition of *the truth of the miracles of Christ and the Apostles*; as they stand recorded in the New Testament, and sets forth the proper distinction between them, and the miracles of the succeeding ages, in order to shew, that whatever be the success of that work, the credit of the Gospel cannot be affected by it. In this our Observator perfectly agrees with Dr. M——n, and expressly declares, in different parts of his book, *that, if not so much as one true miracle could be found after the days of the Apostles, the foundations of Christianity would be equally secure* [1]. Yet, notwithstanding these declarations, we find him perpetually insinuating, that the very attempt to prove, what when actually proved, he affirms, to be of no significancy, is dangerous to the Authority of the Gospel, and sufficient to alarm all good Christians with the apprehension of its consequences.

In the same manner, all the other Advocates of the primitive miracles, in the midst of their zeal to assert their authority, take care to distinguish the Apostolic miracles, as established on much clearer evidence and a firmer foundation. Thus Dr. Berriman, speaking of a particular miracle of the fifth Century, affirms, *that*

[1] P. 30.

it cannot be discredited, without rejecting all accounts of miracles, except those of the Scriptures [1]: intimating by that exception, that the Scriptural miracles would stand, though all the rest were overthrown. Yet no sooner does Dr. M—— attempt to overthrow them, than we hear these very men crying out with one voice, that *he is overthrowing Christianity itself, and whatever his intention may be, that he will carry us of course either into Popery or Scepticism* [2]. Hence we may observe, how easily spleen and prejudice can over-rule the reason and even conviction of these writers, and how the zeal, which they so warmly express in the present case, cannot be a zeal for the Gospel, which they declare to be unconcerned in it, but for some particular opinions and systems, which have been engrafted upon it at different times, for the more commodious support of the interests, or ease of the leading Churchmen.

Again, it is affirmed *in the Introductory Discourse*, “that the miracles of the fourth Century were universally the effects of fraud and imposture; which yet all the principal Fathers of that age, partly through weak credulity, and partly through reasons of policy, made it their business to propagate, in favor of certain rites and doctrines, which they were desirous to establish: that considering the characters of those Fathers, it was reasonable to

[1] See Serm. at Lady Moyer's lecture, p. 327. [2] See Def. of Dr. C——'s Charge, p. 46.

“ think, that they either forged those miracles
 “ themselves, or knew them to be forged by
 “ others; or, if that should not be granted, it
 “ was certain at least, that they were so far de-
 “ luded by other people’s forgeries, as to take
 “ them for real miracles: and let the Advo-
 “ cates of those Fathers chuse which of these al-
 “ ternatives they pleased, it would have the
 “ same force towards evincing Dr. M——’s
 “ general conclusion,” *That we have no sufficient
 ground to believe upon their authority, that any mi-
 raculous powers were subsisting in the Church in
 that age.*

This state of the case is clear and consistent. Let us see then, how the Observator has contrived to perplex it. In the first place, he is angry with Dr. M——, for charging those miracles to *fraud and imposture*, when it was as easy to ascribe them to *superstition and credulity*: is every man a knave or cheat, says he, who believes, that there is virtue in an amulet or charm [1]? By this easy way of putting the question, one would imagine the dispute to have turned onely, on the primitive method of *curing the cramp, or the tooth-ach*. But when positive testimonies have been produced from the most venerable of the Fathers, declaring, that *the dead had been raised to life, and the blind restored to sight, by touching the reliques* of some reputed Saint, or by sending *their clothes onely to be touched* by them; will the *virtue of an amulet* be sufficient to account for

[1] Observat. p. 13.

the reality of such facts, or the belief of that virtue, to justify the integrity of such witnesses? But on this article he asks, *how Dr. M—— comes to know, that the Fathers did not believe the miracles which they themselves have recorded* [1]? The answer is obvious, that the nature of the things attested, and the characters of the persons attesting, must convince every reasonable man, that they could not believe them. And here it is curious to observe, how the state of the controversy is of a sudden reversed: for the Observer, whose chief quarrel with Dr. M—— is, for his injurious opinion and treatment of the ancient Fathers, now takes the opposite side, and quarrels with him, for thinking more highly of them than he himself does. Dr. M—— conceives so good an opinion of their understanding, as to think it impossible, that they should not discover the palpable forgery of the absurd stories which they relate; whereas the Observer takes them to have been so grossly ignorant and credulous, that they might probably believe them.

Since he is so fond then of this hypothesis of their *credulity*, and thinks it, the onely way of saving the more valuable character of their integrity, it will be proper to consider the nature and extent of it a little more precisely, by applying it to a particular fact or two, on which it is supposed to have been exercised: which I shall extract again from St. *Jerom*, as being of all the Ancients, the most generally esteemed for

[1] P. 14.

his learning and judgement, by the Divines of these days.

This Father, in his life of *St. Hilarion the Monk*, among many other monstrous stories, relates, “ how that holy man happening to travel in *Dalmatia*, was there presently informed, “ that a terrible Dragon was laying waste the “ whole province, of so enormous a size and “ strength, that he could suck up into his “ mouth, by the force of his breath, whole ox- “ en and sheep, together with the herdsmen and “ shepherds, and swallow them down at once. “ *Hilarion* therefore, being implored by the in- “ habitants of the country, to deliver them “ from this monster, ordered a pile of wood to “ be prepared, and having put up his prayers to “ Christ, called out the Dragon and command- “ ed it to ascend the pile, which being done ac- “ cordingly, he set fire to the wood, and so the “ beast was burnt alive, in the sight of all the “ people [1].”

The same Father, in his Life also of an Her- mit, named *Paul*, tells this story, “ that when “ *St. Anthony*, another Hermit, was travelling “ through the deserts of *Egypt*, to seek out *Paul*, “ whom he was ordered to visit by a divine re- “ velation, he met with a *Centaur* upon the “ road, and being amazed at the figure of so “ strange a creature, and having armed himself “ with the sign of the Cross, he demanded of “ the beast, in what part of the desert the Ser-

[1] Hieron. Op. Tom. IV. par. ii. p. 87.

“vant of God resided: to which the *Centaur*
 “made some answer in a strange and horrible
 “tone of voice, and with gestures of great civi-
 “lity, pointed out the way to him at the same
 “time, by stretching out his right hand, and
 “then ran swiftly away.” Upon which, *Jerom*
 leaves it as a problem, to the consideration of
 the reader, *whether the Devil assumed that shape,*
to affright the holy man, or the Deserts, fruitful
of monsters, produced that species also of animals.
 But be that as it will, “*Anthony* had not gone
 “many steps farther, wondering within himself
 “at what he had just seen, before he espied a
 “*Satyr* approaching towards him, or a little
 “man, with Goat’s feet, a crooked nose, and a
 “forehead armed with horns, who, in token
 “of peace, offered him the fruit of the palm
 “tree, and being asked presently by *Anthony*,
 “what he was, gave this answer; I am a mor-
 “tal, and one of those inhabitants of the De-
 “sert, whom the deluded Gentiles worship,
 “under the names of *Fauns*, *Satyrs*, and *In-*
 “*cubi*, and am now deputed, as an Embassa-
 “dor from our whole tribe, to beg your prayers
 “and intercession for us, to our common
 “Lord and master, whom we know to have
 “been sent for the salvation of the whole
 “world:”—To which story *Jerom* adds this
 remark; “that no man need to be scrupulous
 “about the truth of it, because it was confirmed
 “to the whole world, in the time of *Constantin*,
 “when a little man, of the same species, was
 “brought

“brought alive to *Alexandria*, and afforded a remarkable spectacle to the whole people [1].”

Now it is allowed by all, that St. *Jerom* was a man of great parts and knowledge: Dr. *Chapman* declares, *that he understood the nature of piety and superstition, as well as any man living: and were he now alive, would soon do justice to himself and his brethren by his pen, and lash his revilers into a little more gravity and civility* [2]. If then, notwithstanding the authority of so great a man, Dr. *M*— finds himself convinced from the very nature of these stories, that they are all utterly fabulous, he must be thought to judge reasonably, in believing, that St. *Jerom*, (the superiority of whose judgement and learning he freely acknowledges) could not fail of being convinced of it too. But if our *Observer* has any scruples still on this head, and will insist, that *Jerom* might actually believe them, I am content to debate the matter with him on his own terms, and refer the whole quæstion to this single issue; *whether men so grossly credulous and superstitious can be authentic witnesses of miracles, which tend to confirm their particular interests, or prejudices, or favorite opinions?*

In the mean while, I find it necessary to take notice of a distinction or two, of which he makes great use, and in which his chief strength lies; for unless we can clear ourselves of these, we may spare the pains of disputing with him,

[1] Ibid. p. 70, 71. [2] See *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 182. and *Def. of his Charge*, p. 38.

since

since by their help, he can evade the conclusion, though he allows all the premises. For example, it is affirmed in *the Introductory Discourse*, that *the Fathers themselves, when they are disposed to speak truth, have not scrupled to confess, that miracles were actually ceased in the fourth Century, because the Church stood no longer in need of them* [1]. The Observator himself allows, that *there are many such passages in those Fathers* [2]. Yet the same Fathers, on other occasions, confidently affirm, and sometimes from their own knowledge, that perpetual miracles were still wrought in the same age, by *reliques, sacred oil, holy water, the sign of the Cross, and the sacramental bread*. Now from passages, so seemingly opposite and contradictory, a plain man would naturally conclude, that those Fathers were inconsistent with themselves, and telling us consequently what was false, either on the one side or the other. But such an imagination must not be entertained, it seems, of persons so holy and venerable; who were *too good*, as Dr. Chapman declares, *to offer at any quirks or illusions* [3]: of which this Observator will presently convince us, and solve the difficulty. For having discovered, that the miracles, which are recorded by St. Austin, are all said to have been wrought, not by the ministry of living men, extraordinarily appointed, as in the Apostles days, but either by the Sacraments, or by prayer, or the memories of the

[1] See Disc. p. 36.

[2] Observ. p. 9. See note.

[3] Miscell. Tracts, p. 26.

Martyrs,

Martyrs, he makes this reflection upon it, that
 “ if the Author of the *Introductory Discourse*
 “ would have understood those passages of the
 “ Fathers, as they ought to be understood, with
 “ this distinction, he would have spared his un-
 “ mannerly reflection. Because it might be
 “ true, *that miracles were then wrought by the Sa-*
 “ *craments, though it was not true, that any were*
 “ *then wrought by the ministry of living men, as in*
 “ *the days of the Apostles* [1].”

These polemic writers, if they can serve a present turn, and get rid of some incidental difficulty in a debate, by any quibble of this sort, seldom look forward, or consider, what effect it may have on the main question, or on Christianity itself. The present distinction serves to clear the Fathers from the charge of inconsistency; and so far it will be applauded by all the admirers of primitive antiquity; but it has not yet done half its work; for unless the reason, assigned by those Fathers, for *the cessation of miracles*, can be distinguished also away, they must be understood to be speaking of an *universal cessation*, because, *the Church*, as they tell us, *stood no longer in need of them*. But here indeed, our Observator's distinction will do most notable service: for though the religion of the Gospel, after it had gained an establishment in the world, stood no longer in need of miracles, wrought by *the ministry of living men*, as in the days of the Apostles, which were necessary onely to the first

[1] Observ. p. 9. note.

plantation of it, yet the new rites and doctrines engrafted upon that *Gospel-religion*, with regard to *the Sacraments, the reliques* of Saints, and *Monks*, &c. required new miracles of a different kind, to facilitate the establishment also of these; and since living men were no longer indued with those extraordinary gifts, the inanimate part of the creation was now called up in judgement against the contemnners of these rites; and the *rotten bones and dust of the Martyrs*; or a *rag of their old cloaths*; a *drop of water, or oil*; a *bit of bread*; the *chip of an old Cross*, or the *figure of a new one*; in short, every thing which had been touched by a Saint, or consecrated by a Priest, began to work miracles, and continues to do so, in the same manner, from that time to this, through four parts in five of the whole Christian world.

Thus we see, what clear work our Observer's distinction would make in the present question. But there is one unhappy circumstance belonging to it, which he is not perhaps aware of, or willing at least to conceal, that it is contrary to fact, and the testimony of those very Fathers, in whose defence he now urges it. For though they speak much more frequently of miracles wrought by *reliques, and the Sacraments*, &c. than of any other kind, yet they speak likewise of several, which they attest to be wrought by *holy Monks, then living*; by the credit of which, they chiefly established the Monkish order, though vile and contemptible in the judgement

judgement of the wiser and better sort of the Christian laity in those very days.

Again, Dr. M—— lays it down for a maxim, in the *Introductory Discourse*, that *whenever any sacred rite becomes the instrument of real miracles, we ought to consider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation*: whence he infers, *that if we admit the miracles of the fourth Century, we must admit the rites which those miracles confirmed, and those Fathers practised*. But here again, the Observer stops us short with a distinction, without which, he says, *that reasoning cannot be true* [1]. The distinction is this; “that miracles wrought by *the reliques* of the Martyrs, or
“by the *Sacraments*, or by *holy Monks*, cannot
“reasonably be interpreted to authorise any superstitious practice or doctrine, which prevailed in those times with regard to *reliques*,
“or *the Sacrament*, or *Monkery*, unless there be
“some circumstance in them, which specifies
“such an interpretation; for otherwise they
“must be understood onely, to confirm that religion of the Gospel, for which those Martyrs
“died, and which those Monks professed.” In the support of which distinction, he spends two or three pages, with some little subtilty and refinement, but not a grain of sense in them; and serving onely to illustrate his own ignorance of the times, and the subject too, of which he is talking.

[1] Observ. p. 8, 10.

For instance; it was the principal devotion of the fourth Century, in all cases of sickness or distress, *to fly to the tombs of the Martyrs*; grounded on a general persuasion, that by prostrating themselves *before their reliques, and especially by touching them*, they should find present cure and relief: and great numbers are affirmed by the Fathers, to have been cured in this manner of all sorts of diseases, and several, *to have been raised even from the dead*. Now let him distinguish here, as much as he pleases, it is certain from the experience of all ages, that the attestation and belief of such miraculous cures never had any other effect, or were understood to have any other meaning, than to imprint an opinion of *a divine virtue in the reliques*, and consequently, to authorize *the worship* which was paid to them: which began to be paid, from the very moment in which they first began to work miracles, and was soon carried to that extravagance, with which we see it practised at this day, in the Church of *Rome*.

The Observer however insists, *that if God thinks fit, to work a cure by dead men's bones, it will not follow, that dead men or their bones ought to be worshiped* [1]. But the fact is, that the worship of them did immediately follow, and has ever since followed, and must for ever follow, the belief of such cures, to the utter confutation of his silly hypothesis. For in order to defend the authority of the Fathers, he first supposes it true,

[1] Observ. p. 10.

that miracles were really wrought by *dead men's bones*; and then, in contradiction to their authority, is forced to deny the use and end for which the same Fathers declare them to have been wrought, and which, by the credit of those pretended miracles, gained an establishment through the whole Christian world: whereas the end for which they were wrought, and the effect which they have constantly produced, ought to have convinced him, and every other Protestant, that they were all mere fictions.

For it is certain, though he does not seem to know it, that all the miracles of this kind were suspected and contemned, from the very beginning, by the more discreet and honest part of the Clergy, who argued, “ that signs and wonders
“ were proper indeed, for the conversion of Hea-
“ thens and unbelievers, whose prejudices were
“ too strong to be over-ruled by the cool argu-
“ ments of reason; but that miracles wrought
“ by *reliques*, within the Church and among the
“ faithful, were of no use to the advancement of
“ the Gospel, but tended to corrupt and debase
“ it, by the introduction of paganish supersti-
“ tions into the Christian worship [1].” Which controversy began with the first relique-worship of those primitive ages, in the same manner as it is carried on at this day, between the Protestants and Papists, yet the Observator supposes, that God might be working miracles all the while, by *dead men's bones*, without intending

[1] Vid. Hieron. Op. Tom. IV. par. ii. p. 285.

that

that they should give any sanction to a superstitious worship; intirely grounded upon the belief, that this approbation was signified by those very miracles.

But he observes, " that the Author of the *Introductory Discourse*, would have had a better pretence for asserting, that we must either accept the doctrines, or reject the miracles of those ages, if he could produce any Monk or other person, who appealed expressly to miracles, in confirmation of an usage, not warranted by Scripture, and to be received as of divine appointment [1]." If he had been acquainted with Ecclesiastic Antiquity, he could not be at a loss for examples of that sort; the very *Discourse*, which he pretends to confute, affords a remarkable one, in the controversy between *Vigilantius*, who protested against the religious honors paid to the bones and dust of the Martyrs, and St. *Jerom*, who defended them: *Answer me, says Jerom, how it comes to pass, that in this vile dust and ashes, there is so great a manifestation of signs and wonders* [2]. For what is this, but a direct appeal to a divine interposition, in favor of that relique-worship, which the primitive Protestants was condemning, and the primitive Fathers defending?

Haring now entertained us with all the little tricks, which occurred to him on this article, he proceeds to confirm them, by the authority of Dr. *Hagitt*, whose determination, as he calls it, on

[1] Obs. p. 6.
VOL. II.

[2] Hieron. *ibid.*
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this very argument, he has transcribed at length in two paragraphs. And lest we should wonder, why the opinion of that ingenious writer should be introduced under the pompous title, *of a determination*, he refers us, for the reason of it, to the bottom of the page [1]; where we are told, *that he was once the Preacher of Gray's Inn*, as if nothing but what is decisive could be delivered from that pulpit.

Let us see then, what it is, that *Dr. Claget* has determined on this question. He declares in the first place, *that the miracles of the fourth century are urged by the Romanists, as an invincible argument, of God's approving the honor given to the Saints and reliques of that age*. But when he attempts to confute that invincible argument, upon the common hypothesis, of the truth of those miracles, he does nothing more, than what our Observator has been doing, and all others must do in the same case, trifle, and shuffle, and labor for pitiful distinctions, which betray a consciousness of acting against his judgement, and oblige him, after all, to signify, that he did not believe those miracles to be true. But what is more remarkable; in the single passage of the two paragraphs, here transcribed, in which *Dr. Claget* can be said to determine any thing at all, he determines in favor of *Dr. M—n's* argument, and declares the same opinion, with respect to the primitive miracles, which is declared in *the Intraductory Discourse*, as it is expressed by him in

[1] Observ. p. 11.

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the following words; *And if I should say, that they, who can be content with the old religion [of the scriptures] may and ought to be content with the old miracles [of the scriptures] I should say no other thing, but what I could justify* [1].

But Dr. Claget, as the Observator tells us, *imputes the false miracles of the fourth century to credulity* [2]; whereas Dr. M—n charges them to *fraud and imposture*, yet sometimes, when he is in better mood, *ascribes them also himself to credulity*. Whence he takes occasion to censure him, *for talking inconsistently, and at random, and varying his charge, as his humour varies* [3]. Which silly blunder runs through his whole performance, and shews how little he has thought upon his subject, since this obvious reflection has never once occurred to him, “that where-ever false
“miracles have obtained a general credit, there
“*fraud and credulity* must both have been jointly
“employed in producing that effect; *fraud* in
“the contrivance, and *credulity* in the reception
“of them; and if either of these can be justly
“charged upon the Fathers, that it will have the
“same force, with respect to the argument of
“the *Introductory Discourse*.”

There is one method of reasoning, peculiar to this Observator, and which I have rarely met with any where else; that in the want of arguments, he can form them at pleasure, even from his own ignorance; the instances of which, he frequently urges, as so many objections to the

[1] P. 12.

[2] 13.

[3] 15, 33.

Introductory Discourse. I cannot see this; do not understand that; am not satisfied that his account is fair; know no such thing; think the Gentleman mistaken; are common objections with him [1]. And though in other writers, a confession of ignorance generally carries some appearance of modesty, yet in this, it seems to flow from that sort of pride, which cannot allow any man, to know more of any subject than himself, or any thing to be true, of which he can be ignorant.

He says, "that he knows no book, not Canonical, which passed upon all the Fathers, as genuine and divine, through several successive ages: nor does it follow, that because some Fathers cited spurious pieces, therefore they were held in the same rank with the Scriptures [2]." To which it will be a sufficient answer for the present, that, in the age immediately succeeding to that of the Apostles, certain writings were forged by some of the ablest and most learned of the Christians, under the title of *Sibylline books or oracles*, which were falsely ascribed to the antient Sibyl, and pretended to foretell and describe prophetically, all the principal acts and circumstances of our Saviour's life. Which books were cited by all the Fathers, and in all ages, from *Justin Martyr's* time down to the Reformation, as genuine, and inspired by God, in the same manner, as the *prophetic books of the Old Testament*; and particularly, in the second century, that *Clemens of Alexandria*, one

[1] P. 5, 7, 18, 20, 26.

[2] 21.

of the most learned and critical of all the Fathers, appeals to their authority as divine, and confirms it by the express testimonies of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, which he draws likewise, from certain spurious books, which were current in that age, and believed to be the genuin writings of those Apostles.

But here again, he throws in one of his puzzling questions, and asks; "what does the author of the *Discourse* know of the abilities, learning, or religion of those primitive forgers of books, whom he calls the ablest and most learned of the Christians [1]?" To which I may readily answer, that he knows nothing more, than what every man of sense may know, as well as he, from the very nature of the thing; that books, written upon the plan, and for the defence of the Gospel, full of piety and Christian principles, at a time, when that religion was persecuted by all the powers on earth, must needs have been written by Christians; and being so artfully written, and so highly esteemed, as to pass upon the most judicious, for divine or apostolic compositions, they must have been written also, by the *ablest and most learned* of the Christians, at a time, when the whole body of them was generally reproached for their rusticity and want of learning.

He condescends, indeed, to grant, though with some caution, and for *argument's sake*, as he says, that the Fathers made use, both of spurious books,

[1] P. 22.

and forged miracles: from which he draws this inference; “that as together with those spurious books, they used some, which were genuine, “so it is natural to suppose, that among their “false miracles there might be some also, “which were real: and then asks, how this can “help to support the general conclusion, that “*no miracles were wrought in those ages* [1].”

But from a joint use of *spurious and genuine books*, to infer a joint use also of *spurious and genuine miracles*, is weak and fallacious; because there is no analogy between the two cases: for the use of books, whether spurious or genuine, depends intirely on man; whereas in the use of miracles, as far as any of them are true, God himself must also be concerned. When the leaders therefore of a Church, either through craft or credulity, are imposing false miracles upon the people; to suppose, that God would become a party, and throw in a true miracle now and then, to give them credit, is not onely an absurd, but impious supposition. But should I allow, that the detection of spurious books and false miracles, does not necessarily prove, that there were no true miracles in the same age, and will not consequently support Dr. M—’s general conclusion; yet the Observer’s quæstion is certainly impertinent, because he might have seen, from the *Introductory Discourse*, that the proof of those forgeries was not intended, *to support that conclusion*, but onely to strengthen the

[1] P. 22.

probability of it, in concert with twenty others, which more directly confirm it. The whole purpose, for which it is urged, is granted by himself, and must be allowed by every body else; that those, who *forged books*, would, for the same cause, *forge miracles* too, if there was an occasion for them; and that the frequent use of such forgeries, which is allowed to have been made by the principal Fathers, must increase the suspicion, that all the miracles, which they attest, were of the same kind.

Among many other censures upon the Author of *the Introductory Discourse*, he charges him, "with acting disingenuously, in publishing it, without sending his larger work abroad at the same time, and scattering his surmises, before the evidence is heard. Which has the appearance, he says, of an experiment rather, to try the sense of the public, than of confidence in the justice of his cause [1]." And here, indeed, I readily agree with him, that, by the separate publication of *that Discourse*, the Author of it seems to intimate some distrust of himself, and a temper totally different from that confidence, with which the *Observer* rushes into a controversy, without any previous acquaintance with it: who yet in this very cause, and before the evidence, as he complains, is heard, makes no scruple to pronounce sentence; and like a worthy Ecclesiastic Judge, to dismiss it at once, as frivolous and vexatious.

[1] *Observat.* p. 24.

But whatever judgement he may think fit to declare on the subject of the *Intraductory Discourse*; Dr. M— knows it to be important; and treats it as such; yet is sensible, that he stands single in the defence of it, and aware of the censures, which it may draw upon him from the bigotted, the interested, and the ambitious part of the Clergy; from some, who possess the chief preferments of the Church, and from all the numerous tribe, who court them. He remembers, what clamors and injurious suspicions, the freedom of his writings has formerly drawn upon him from that same sort of men; who treat him as an enemy, not onely to the present establishment of our Church, but to religion itself: yet, conscious of his integrity, and that his principles tend to fix them both on a more secure foundation, he writes with no other view, than to unite all reasonable Protestants the more firmly in their defence; and to guard our people, as well from *Popish superstition*, as *fanatical enthusiasm*; both of them equally dangerous to the peace of these Kingdoms, and both making advances upon us at this very time, from different quarters indeed, and parties of men, but from the same source and pattern of primitive antiquity.

In these circumstances, persuaded that he was doing service, yet decried, as if he were doing mischief to Christianity, how could he act with more candor or deference to the public authority, than by sending his scheme abroad in this plain

plain and naked form; that if any one of superior judgement and knowledge of Antiquity, should happen to convince him, either of the falsehood or iniquity of it, he might withdraw it in time, before he had engaged himself too forwardly in it, or warmed himself and his readers too much, to judge impartially of the particular proofs, which may be alledged in confirmation of it. But if it be found, after all, to contain nothing either false or iniquitous, nor to threaten any hurt to any thing, but to groundless systems, and superstitious opinions, which have no other claim to be retained, but that they have long been established, and are of no other use, but to lull us on in a slothful ignorance and implicit credulity, or to gratify the indolence of some leading Churchmen, who think, that nothing can want a change which contributes to their repose. If this, I say, should be the case, and no material objection be offered, but that perpetual obstacle of all reformation, *an affected dread of improbable consequences, and the danger of disturbing settlements*, he will not be driven by any discouragement, which he may meet with, from pursuing his destined task of publishing his free thoughts on all questions, and especially on those which relate to religion, as far as he believes them to be true, and of benefit also to the public.

But to return to our Observator, who begs our patience for one word more, concerning the connection between the argument of *the Introductory*

ductory Discourse; and our controversy with the Church of Rome : with respect to which, it is affirmed in that Discourse, *that by admitting the miracles of the primitive ages, we shall be entangled in a series of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourselves, without allowing the same miraculous powers even to the present age.* Here again he asks, *what are these difficulties which the Gentleman is so afraid of?* declares, *that he sees none; and that we may surely be justified in admitting the miracles of the second and third centuries, without being obliged to receive the Popish legends* [1]. But by what principle or distinction may we be so sure of it? For even his *polemic genius* has not been able to suggest any : and it is certain, that every other Protestant, who has taken the most pains, towards searching this matter to the bottom, has found those pains perpetually frustrated by insuperable difficulties. In condescension, therefore, to his confessed ignorance, I shall endeavour to lay the question before him in such a light, as may inable him to see some of its difficulties, if his blindness be not incurable.

It is allowed by all Christians, that the miraculous gifts, which are mentioned in the Gospel, continued in the Church, through the Apostolic age : and it is affirmed by the Fathers and Church Historians, that they subsisted still in the same manner, after the days of the Apostles, and were openly exerted in every succeeding

[1] Obs. p. 26.

age,

age, down even to the present : which is now the prevailing opinion, in much the greatest part of the Christian world ; and the chief argument, by which *the superstitious rites and doctrines of the Romish Church* are at this day supported.

The Protestants, on the other hand, in contradiction to the Romanists, universally affirm, that *the miraculous gifts of the Apostolic days have long since utterly ceased* in the Christian Church, but cannot agree among themselves about the time, when the cessation of them commenced, nor have been able to assign any probable criterion, by which we may declare them, to have proceeded thus far and no farther : yet the Observer sees no difficulty in the case, and cannot conceive wherein it lies.

Many of the Protestants, indeed, as it is said in *the Introductory Discourse*, take the conversion of the Roman Empire to have been the æra, in which true miracles ceased. But this is a mere arbitrary hypothesis, grounded neither on History, nor any solid reason ; because miracles are said to have been wrought still, after that period, as freely as before it, and in some cases attested by the same witnesses ; who, by this hypothesis, must be held worthy of all credit before that revolution, yet unworthy of any, immediately after it. But what is still of more difficult digestion, this same hypothesis, if admitted to be true, gives the lie at once to all the illustrious Fathers of the fourth Century, *St. Epiphanius, St. Basil, St. Athanasius, St. Jerom,*
St.

St. Ambrose, St. Chrysostom, St. Austin, &c. persons the most highly-reverenced and Sainted by the Catholic Church, for their piety, probity, zeal, and services to the Christian religion : who have all severally recorded and affirmed great numbers of miracles, to have been wrought in their times, many years after the conversion of the Roman Empire.

If we trace the succession of miracles still lower, we shall find *Dr. Chapman* defending some even of the fifth century ; the most extravagant perhaps that any history has recorded ; yet declaring, *that we cannot reject them, without shaking the credit of all human testimony, and believing nothing but what we see and feel and know ourselves* [1]. And his fellow-laborer, *Dr. Bertram*, makes the same declaration, in favor of another miracle, in the end of the same century, *which cannot be discredited, he says, without shaking the faith of history, and rejecting all accounts of miracles, besides those of the Scriptures* [2].

Thus according to the judgement of these two Protestant Divines, distinguished by their eminent zeal for primitive antiquity, miracles were still subsisting in the Church, even after it was plunged into the depths of Popery ; yet our Observator sees no difficulty. He will say, perhaps, that wherever we find any superstitious rites established, or incredible facts affirmed, by a pretence of miracles, there we ought to distin-

[1] *Miscell. Tracts*, p. 167. [2] *Serm. at Lady Moy-
er's Lect.* p. 327.

guish

guish and reject such miracles. But this is to beg the question, not to prove it; and is too precarious a way of reasoning to give any satisfaction; because what seems incredible to one, may seem credible to another: and Dr. *Berriman*, speaking of the miracles of the sixth century, has over-ruled every plea of that kind, by declaring, *that we have no reason to dispute the truth of the facts, on account of the miraculousness, or natural incredibility of them, unless it can be proved, as it certainly cannot be, that miracles were ceased in that age* [1].

Thus which way soever we turn ourselves, we shall be entangled only the more, by our struggling. If we urge the incredibility of the facts related in these later ages, these Advocates tell us presently, that the same objection bears as strongly against the earlier ages, but that the authority of the witnesses will over-rule it in both; if we dispute the veracity of the later witnesses, they affirm them to be full as credible, as the more ancient, and their evidence as convincing as human testimony can possibly be. So that no other part is left, but either, to reject all miracles, except those of the Scriptures, agreeably to the genuine interests and principles of Protestants; or else, to admit them all, agreeably to the practice and policy of the Romanists. For what Dr. *Berriman* has declared, concerning the miracles of the sixth century, may as justly be applied to the miracles of the fourth;

[1] Ibid. 356.

that

that there is no reason to dispute the truth of them, unless it can be proved, *that miracles were then ceased*: for on this proof alone, the strength and security of the Protestant cause chiefly depend.

The Observer, however, proceeds to acquaint us, that our Reformers *thought it to their purpose, to challenge as much of antiquity to themselves, as they could find authorities to justify, in the ancient Fathers* [1]. And I may add; that they sometimes challenged more of it than truly be-

[1] Obs. p. 28. But the Observer takes occasion in this place, to censure the Author of the Discourse, *for citing passages from Dr. Waterland unfairly, which, if rightly quoted, would bear directly against him* [p. 28. Note †]. Yet all, which that Author has so cited, is given in Dr. *Waterland's* own words, without any mixture or paraphrase, and, what is more to the purpose, the passage here particularly referred to, is an entire paragraph, in which Dr. *Waterland* professes, to have collected *the sum, of what he had been endeavouring to prove*, in the whole foregoing treatise: and it is not possible, that any man's sentiments can be more fairly represented, than in those very words, to which he him-

self refers us, for the substance of them: and if that Doctor has happened to talk differently in different parts of his writings, it certainly proves nothing else but his own inconsistency. For I may venture to affirm of the Author of the *Introductory Discourse*, what I shall say without scruple of myself, that I have never read all Dr. *Waterland's* works, nor any of them, perhaps, quite through, but have ever valued my time too much, to spend it on such reading; and am content to rank myself among those superficial Dunces, whom Dr. *Chapman* so highly contemns, for satisfying themselves, in the choice of their books, *with a few of the most eminent and elegant in each class*. See his Charge, p. 27.

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longed to them, or was serviceable to their cause. But these Reformers, who dealt so much with antiquity, were generally of that sort, who acted under the direction of the Court, and were forced on that account, to act by political as well as Christian principles: whereas the greater part of the reforming Divines, as well in our own as in foreign countries, who were not cramped by any influence of that kind, but wrote purely for the defence of Protestantism against Popery, frankly rejected and threw out of their Scheme, all the traditions and doctrines, and whole authority of the primitive Fathers, as making no part of their religion, nor serving to to any good purpose in it; of which we have clear proofs in many of their writings still extant.

The Observator having now served his chief purpose, of displaying his *polemic* talents; and shewn, to what length he could hold up the debate, is content at last to give up the main point, which he had seemingly been contending for, and to grant the whole, of what the Author of *the Introductory Discourse* can be concerned about. For he declares, “that when
 “the Apostles died the whole system of faith
 “was sealed up and complete: and as no other
 “faith was afterwards to be admitted, so, if no
 “miracles had afterwards been wrought, the
 “foundation would have been equally secure,
 “since the old miracles are sufficient for the old
 “doctrines.”

“doctrines [1].” And in another place he adds these words; “Say the worst you can say, (and more, I am persuaded, than will ever be proved to be true) that there is not so much as one miracle upon record, since the days of the Apostles, that is sufficiently attested: what has Christianity to do with this? Nothing. For Christianity stands not upon the new miracles, but upon the old [2].” But though this be true; I must put him however in mind of what he ought to have intimated at the same time, that it is true only, with regard to that Christianity which is professed by Protestants; whereas *Papish Christianity*, which possesses much the largest share of the Christian world, would be undone at once, if the authority of the primitive Fathers and primitive miracles should be rejected in common by all Christians.

The sum then of all, which our Observer has affirmed on this question, with any sense or truth, as well as of Dr. Claget’s determination, on which he lays no small stress, amounts to no more than this, *that the Protestant religion stands firm upon the foundation of the old miracles of the Gospel; and that Protestants, consequently, if they are consistent with themselves, ought to be content with those old miracles, and neglect all the rest.* And this, I say, is as much as Dr. Ad— can expect from the generality of those, who may happen to read his *Introductory Discourse*. For he is not so weak as to imagine, that an argu-

[1] *Obf.* p. 30.

[2] P. 32.

ment so new, and so little understood, and urged in contradiction to the most inveterate prejudices, can carry conviction with it every where, to the length of his own persuasion; or prevail at once over the testimony of sixteen centuries. Yet he may flatter himself without vanity, that whether the primitive miracles be thought true or false, he shall convince the cool and considerate part of his readers, that the Protestant cause has no concern at all with them, and will find its best defence and security, both against the Papists and the Freethinkers, in a total neglect and rejection of them.

This is what the Observer himself has granted in effect; and what many more, I dare say, will grant with him, upon the perusal of *the Introductory Discourse*. The onely difference is, that every liberal inquirer, who seeks truth and instruction from the use of books, will acknowledge the conviction which he receives with some civility towards his instructor: whereas this writer seems to be of that class, who look upon every attempt to instruct, as an invasion on their province, and an affront to their sufficiency; and make it their business, therefore, to write against all who venture to offer their thoughts to the public, without their license. With this hostile temper, he attacks the Author of *the Discourse*, though he had never personally offended him; and labors to fix some malignity upon his writings, though he owns

them at last to be innocent; and when he is driven to the acknowledgement of any truth, does it with so ill a grace, as shews that he has some reason still within himself to wish rather that it had been false.

To conclude; there are two or three facts which I would particularly recommend to the reader's consideration, as being not onely of great weight in the present controversy, but admitted also as true, by all the adversaries of the *Introductory Discourse*.

1st, That a great part of the primitive miracles, and especially those of the fourth century, were mere fictions, contrived and imposed by the crafty upon the credulous part of the Christians of that age.

2^{dly}, That if all the miracles of all ages, after the Apostles, were found to be of the same stamp, the authority of the Gospel could not be shaken by it.

3^{dly}, That at the time of the Reformation, the onely time in all history when the miracles of the Church were freely examined by Christians themselves, they were all found to be false.

Now a proper attention to these facts, and the consequences of them, must be sufficient, one would think, to supersede all farther dispute on this quæstion; and to convince every sensible and unprejudiced reader, of the reasonableness, not onely of suspecting, but of rejecting, all

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other miracles, except those of the Scriptures. It is certain, at least, that it must expose the absurdity of these Zealots, in alarming a Protestant nation with apprehensions of danger, from the free discussion of an argument, which by their own confession can do no mischief to any system of Christianity, but what is now professed and practised by the Church of *Rome*.

R E M A R K S
ON THE
JESUIT-CABAL.

E 3

R E M A R K S

O N T H E

J E S U I T - C A B A L.

WHEN I sat down to examine this *Defence of Dr. Chapman's Charge*, I could not help amusing myself a while, with the quaintness of the *Title-page*; which seemed to have undergone several corrections, and to have cost the Archdeacon no small pains, before it was reduced to its present form. In the first Advertisement, which was given of it, in the public papers, the Title, if my memory does not deceive me, stood thus; *The Jesuit's Cabinet farther opened, &c.* But the notion of opening a Cabinet being vulgar, and what every writer would use on such an occasion, was thought unworthy, it seems, of the Archdeacon's erudition, and changed therefore, as we now see, into the more recondite phrase, *of opening a Cabal* [1].

[1] This change however there is reason to think, that, was not made at once, nor in running over all the changes into which it might naturally be resolved, *Cabala* not been prepared by some was his first choice, and inserted accordingly into the

In the latter part also of the same title, some alteration appears to have been made, after the book was sent to the Press: for in the first Advertisement likewise, if I remember right, the Author of the Postscript was called a *Scurrilous*, as well as *Declamatory Remarker*; whereas in the publication of it, the word *Scurrilous* is now omitted: from what motive, I cannot say; but certainly, not from any scruples on the Archdeacon's part: for though his friends might persuade him, that an expression so gross would be too glaring in the first page, yet none of them could restrain him, from using it with all freedom in the second.

From this short view of the Title-page, let us pass on to the book itself; which I take the liberty to call Dr. *Chapman's*: not because common fame calls it so; nor because he had declared a resolution, of writing and publishing a *Defence of his Charge*; but because it is a work of that kind, which nobody could have written but himself: because the style, the matter, and,

Title, while the book was yet in the Press; as a word, the best adapted to the profundity of his own erudition, as well as to that mystery of iniquity, which he was going to lay open. For about the middle of his piece, he refers us, as it were, to the Title, so reformed, and speaks in express terms of *Father Harduin's Cabala*. [Def. p.

23.] Yet on more mature deliberation, *Cabala* was finally reduced to *Cabal*; which answered more directly to the purpose, both of his *Charge and Defence*, and conveyed that very notion, which he there labors to inculcate, of a number of men, engaged and confederated in this Jesuitical plot.

to borrow a little of his own language, the whole *figuration and indifferentism* of it shew the *Jesuit-Cabal* to be a *Chapman Performance*.

The first paragraph will confirm the truth of it, which begins with these words. *A late Author, who, for reasons best known to himself, did not care for expressing his name*, has appeared very captious and splenetic against the Rev. Dr. *Chapman*. Now would a writer of any judgement begin an anonymous work, with a piece of railery of this kind, without feeling that it would turn upon himself, and serve as well, for the exordium of his Adversary's Reply, as his own Defence? their names are equally suppressed on both sides; and for reasons too best known to themselves; yet there is this difference, that the reasons of the Author of the Postscript, tho' best known to himself, may be understood likewise by others; whereas it would be difficult for Dr. *Chapman* to assign any, but his great modesty, for the concealment of his name; who, from a consciousness of the public favor, and his own superior merit, can venture to boast, in this very paragraph, "of the strength, the spirit, "and the perspicuity, of his *Archidiaconal Charge*; and of the honors which have been "paid to him on that account, by several "distinct Assemblies of the Clergy: can appeal "to a character, which, it is not possible to "hurt, with any man living who knows him; "and promise better entertainment to his readers, than his *Scurrilous Antagonist* can afford."

But

But whatever his meaning might be, in this first stroke of his raillery, it happened unluckily for him, that his jest was spoiled before it was out, and the Postscript had acquired the name of its Author, before the *Jesuit-Cabal* was yet published.

In the next sentence, however, he professes a most intimate acquaintance with his anonymous Adversary, and to know the very inside of him ; and, with the zeal of another St. *Jerom*, declares, that the evil spirit, which prompts him to write at this rate, *is excessively galled, and stung by the fame and success of his writings, and cannot bear the approbation with which they have been received ; but is so full of spleen and resentment, that if he did not give a vent to those passions, by this scurrility of sneering,* they would certainly burst him. In answer to which, I can take upon me to affirm with great truth, in the name of Dr. *M*——, the Author of the Postscript ; that he has never conceived the least degree of spleen from any of his performances, though some of them have been published against himself, but has constantly reaped that pleasure from them, which a liberal mind will always enjoy ; from the works of a dull, conceited, bigotted Adversary, who had forwardly and petulantly attacked him, to find him destitute of every talent, which could recommend them to the public ; and to see the efforts of his zeal and bigotry in great measure defeated, by the dulness and perplexity with which he labors to inculcate them. Nor has
Dr.

Dr. M— ever been conscious, of bearing envy to any man whatsoever, for the superiority of his parts or learning, or, what is more commonly the object of it, his preferments; but finds great reason to be content with his present share, as well of fortunes as of credit in the world; and to esteem that competency of both, with which Providence has blessed him, and that leisure, freedom, and independency, which he has always enjoyed, above all the advantages which he might possibly have acquired, by giving a more ambitious turn to his Life and Studies. And he should think more contemptibly of himself, than even his enemies affect to do, and that he had spent his time and pains to very little purpose, if at his years, and in his circumstances, he had suffered it to be in the power, I will not say, of a little Archdeacon, but of a late great Archbishop, to give any disturbance to the ease and quiet of his mind. The sole disgust, which he can receive from any of them, and that, on the publick account, not on his own, is to see them encouraging and inculcating such a spirit of superstition and credulity in a Protestant Church, as the Papists themselves would be ashamed of: and he considers it, as the chief credit and comfort of his life, that he has the sense to condemn, and the resolution to oppose, all such attempts, and their Authors, by whatever name or title they may be dignified and distinguished.

With

With this view he published a few remarks on Dr. *Chapman's Archidiaconal Charge*, which, instead of galling, had given him the pleasure of laughing at it more heartily, than any composition of this kind, which he had ever seen, as being, of all others, the most elaborately ridiculous. Nor was it the purpose of those remarks, to cast a *blemish*, as he intimates, on his envied fame, but to do a piece of justice to the real merit both of the *Charge* and its Author, by that best and gentlest method of correction, which nature has ordained in such a case, of laughing him down into his proper rank and character. This was the just treatment which his *Charge* received, not only from the Author of the *Postscript*, but from every body else: and this Defence of it, I doubt, will hardly deserve any other. Of which, however, we shall be better able to judge, after we have taken a view of those parts of it, which may seem to demand a more serious regard.

There are two capital points, which he is obliged to make good, if he really means to vindicate his *Charge* from the exceptions of *the Postscript*.

1st, That *Father Harduin's plot* has been carried on with great success for half a century past, and spread its infection far and wide, so as to be threatening the greatest danger, and working incredible mischief at this very time, to the religion, learning, and liberty of all Protestants.

2dly,

2dly, That the writings and authority of St. *Jerom* are of peculiar service, to confirm the religion of Protestants, in opposition to the present worship and religion of the Papists.

As to the first of these points, which is the principal subject of his *Charge*, the dispute between us is, not about the natural tendency of the Jesuit's scheme ; or the mischiefs, which it might have wrought, if it had met with a general reception in the world ; or the sentiments of a few particular men, or the private wishes of the whole body of the Jesuits, concerning it ; but the sole quæstion is, whether it has ever found such a degree of credit, and been carried so far into execution, as to create any real danger, or to work any actual mischief to the Protestant cause, in any country whatsoever, and especially in *England*, where this alarm was given.

This, I say, is the single point in the dispute : yet when we come to examine, what new light the Archdeacon has produced, towards clearing up this quæstion of fact, we find nothing more in his *Defence*, than what we had seen before in his charge ; a cloud of authorities, without any weight ; an ostentation of learning, without sense ; his affirmations refuted by his concessions ; till the sum of his defence is not onely reduced to nothing, but the balance turned against himself ; as every one must see, who will take the pains to cast up the account, and weigh

weigh the particular articles on the one side, against those of the other.

For instance ; on the affirmative side he sets forth :

1st, " That *Father Harduin's* obnoxious pieces " were licensed by *two Provincials of the Jesuits*, " upon a certificate from three Divines of the " same order, that they contained nothing re- " pugnant to the Catholic faith and good mo- " rals [1]."

2dly, " That *Cardinal de Bissy* gave broad " hints, in his pastoral instructions, of his favo- " rable inclinations to the Jesuit's scheme [2]."

3dly, " That seven or eight particular men, " in different parts of *Europe*, *M. Ballonfeaux*, a " President of the Senate at *Luxembourg* ; a Gen- " tleman at *Amsterdam* ; the Editor of *Harduin's* " works ; *M. Perchambaud*, a President of the " Parliament of *Bretagne* ; a literary Journalist " at the *Hague* ; an anonymous writer of great " fire and zeal ; an Antiquarian of no small " note, at *Lyons* ; had all of them done, or said, " or written something or other, in favor of " *Harduin's* scheme [3]."

All which testimonies he closes with a cha- racter of *Harduin*, given in the Protestant acts of *Leipfic*, 1735 ; in which he is declared to be a writer of *a wonderful genius, whose works will give pleasure to all who read them, though they breathe in all parts more of genius than of truth* [4].

[1] See Def. p. 8, 9. [2] p. 19. [3] p. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. [4] p. 21, 22.

This

This is the summ of all the positive evidence, by which he pretends to demonstrate the success and danger of this Jesuitical scheme; in abatement of which, he grants at the same time,

1st, "That the Superiors, and Principals of
 " all the Colleges and Societies of the Jesu-
 " its in *France*, published a formal protest-
 " ation against it, in the name of their
 " whole Order, and obliged *Harduin* pub-
 " lickly to retract it. And that he does
 " not quæstion the sincerity of those Supe-
 " riors [1]."

2dly, "That when Cardinal *de Bissy* ventured
 " to publish some hints in favor of it, five
 " or six Bishops made an outcry against
 " him to the King [2]."

3dly, "That the Critics and Scholars in ge-
 " neral of all countries, treated it as an ex-
 " travagant, chimerical, and impracticable
 " whim [3]: that all the ingenuous among
 " the *Jesuits themselves*, many *Benedictins*
 " and *Sorbonists*, and several other orders
 " in *France* and *Italy*, sharply declared their
 " abhorrence of it: that in particular, the
 " learned Fathers *Tournemine* and *Grain-*
 " *ville*, made strong declarations against
 " it; and the men of sense and learning
 " in *Rome*, such as *Quirini* and *Fontinini*,
 " talked with great freedom and abhor-

[1] See Charge, p. 17. note (+) Def. p. 10, 11. [2] Def.
 p. 19. [3] Charge, p. 10, 11, 20. Def. 5, 6.

" rence

“rence of it, and as he believes, with great
“sincerity and truth [1].”

From this abstract of what he has affirmed on the one side, and granted on the other, the reader will see at once, that his affirmative proofs are infinitely overbalanced by his negative concessions.

He will see, that the solemn and sincere protestation of all the Superiors of the Jesuits, must far outweigh *the License of a Provincial*, a mere matter of form; and reaching no farther, than to testify the consistency of the Scheme with the *Catholic faith and good manners*.

That the loud remonstrances of five or six Bishops would have a greater effect, than the hints onely of a single Cardinal.

That the general consent of the Critics and Scholars of all countries and sects, *Jesuits, Benedictines, Sorbonists*, and several other Orders, in *France and Italy*, with all the men of learning in *Rome*, is of much greater authority, than the opinions of seven or eight private men, of what rank or condition soever. In short, he will see, I say, at once, that neither the Archdeacon's *Charge* nor *Defence*, can have any thing rational or solid in it, or worthy of any other treatment, but what it has met with, of being contemned and laughed at by all men of sober sense. For should we wave all his concessions, and refer the dispute to the sole merit of his positive testimonies; we shall find them utterly trifling and

[1] See Charge, p. 11, 20. Def. p. 5, 6, 10, 18, 24, &c.
imper-

impertinent, and of no significancy at all towards the confirmation of his argument; amounting, as we have seen, to nothing more than this, *that all people admired the great parts and erudition of Father Harduin, and some few, here and there, of less learning, yet as much enthusiasm perhaps, seemed also to approve his Scheme.* And was any Scheme ever published by a man of reputation, how extravagant and chimerical soever, which had not the luck to find some admirers, and to strike the fancy of a few, as wrong-headed and wild as the Author himself? yet in the present case, it is very remarkable, that, in *England*, where this alarm was given, not so much as a single person has ever been said, or suspected, to have paid the least regard to it.

But let us go still farther, and grant the Archdeacon much more, than he can either claim or desire for the advantage of his cause, that the whole Romish Church is unanimous and zealous in the defence of *Harduin's* Scheme; yet even on this hypothesis, it would be ridiculous, to talk of any particular danger or mischief from it to Protestants, while they continue firm and united in their contempt of it; as it is evident from fact and experience: for instance; there are no articles of Popery so universally professed in that Church, as the *Supremacy of the Pope*, and *Transubstantiation*; nor any, so directly fatal to Protestantism, wherever they are received in any country: but though they are enforced by

the whole united power of the Romish Church, and with many subtil arguments both from reason and Scripture, yet Protestants are under no particular alarm, nor think themselves in any immediate danger on that account ; because they have the sense and learning to discern the absurdity of them, and their mischievous effects on Society in general, as well as on the Protestant religion in particular. Much less can they apprehend any harm from the Jesuit's whim, which, if it had not been too extravagant, might indeed have raised a party for it among the Romanists, by its tendency to advance the power of the Pope and the Church, but has no relation whatsoever to Protestants ; nor any thing in it, that could invite any party or Sect of that profession to embrace it.

Should we suppose then, that the Papists were either divided about it, or united in its defence ; the sole effect, which could reasonably be expected in either case, would finally turn to the hurt, not of Protestantism, but of Popery itself. For by creating a division in that Church, it must in some measure weaken the strength of the whole ; or by uniting the whole in its support, would gradually reduce it again to that state of ignorance and implicit credulity, from which our Ancestors were delivered by the Reformation ; and by restraining the learning and religion of their Clergy, to Church-traditions, Canons, and Papal decrees, would render them only less formidable, and more contemptible

TO

to the Protestants. To alarm us therefore with a Scheme, which, though calculated to serve some particular purposes of Popery, was yet found too chimerical by Papists themselves, to be applied to any purpose, is as contradictory to common sense and reason, as the absurd conceit of the Jesuit on which it is grounded.

The Archdeacon, however, takes great pains to shew, that the Protestants abroad made vehement outcries against it, as *a refinement of the whole Jesuitical order*, and dangerous consequently to their religion. And it is not to be wondered at, that a Scheme of that nature, published by a man of *Harduin's* character, should at first create a suspicion among Protestants, of being more deeply rooted and strongly supported, than it afterwards appeared to be: or till *some good men* among them, as the Archdeacon says, perceived it to be *too extravagant to do any mischief* [1]. Yet, notwithstanding the authority of these *good men*, there were others, it seems, not so good perhaps, yet more sagacious, who continued still to cry out against it as loudly as ever. Nor is this likewise strange, that in the Protestant countries abroad, there should be a sort of men, whom we frequently see at home, who, from motives of vanity, or interest, or ambition, yet under a mask always of religion, are catching all occasions of recommending themselves to public fame and honors, by an affected ostentation of their zeal, and learning, and ser-

[1] See Charge, p. 20.

vices to the Church : and it is easy to imagine, how the example of that *late great ornament of Berlin*, Mr. *La Croze*, whose testimony makes such a figure in this Defence; might excite the zeal and emulation of the *Great Archdeacon of Sudbury*, and suggest to him the plan, and subject of his Charge.

But though he has offered nothing in this Defence, which, in any light or view, tends to confirm the argument of his Charge; yet it is curious to observe, that he makes frequent use of several topics, which directly overthrow it.

For example, in demonstrating the great danger of *Harduin's* Scheme, he often reminds us, how all the Protestants, from the beginning to this day, have constantly decried and rejected it. Now if in any of those Assemblies of the Clergy to which his *Charge* was addressed, any one had risen up in opposition to him, with intent to calm those terrors which he had been infusing, what could he have said more effectual to allay them, than what the Archdeacon had applied to excite them? By assuring his Reverend brethren, “ that whatever he had been declaring
 “ to them with so much solemnity concerning
 “ the dangers of the plot, they need not be un-
 “ der any concern or alarm about it : for tho’
 “ the *Romanists* might in some measure be di-
 “ vided about it, the *Protestants* were all firm
 “ to a man, in their contempt and rejection of
 “ it : that half a century was now past, in which
 “ it had been exerting all its force, without
 “ making

“ making the least impression on any Protestant
 “ Church or Sect whatsoever : that in *England*
 “ especially, where this alarm was now given,
 “ not a single soul was ever suspected of being
 “ tainted with it in any degree : that their own
 “ ignorance of this pretended danger was a sure
 “ proof that there was really none ; and that it
 “ was a gross insult upon the sense, the judge-
 “ ment, and the vigilance of the *English* Cler-
 “ gy, to talk to them with such assurance of a
 “ desperate plot, and *the incredible mischiefs*
 “ which it had been working to their religion
 “ for so many years, and which none of them
 “ all that time, had either the sagacity to dis-
 “ cover, or the zeal to oppose, but their worthy
 “ Archdeacon. That they should reflect on
 “ what he himself had told them in this very
 “ *Charge*, how the plot could never obtain its
 “ end, *till all the writers and monuments of Anti-*
 “ *quity, which obstructed it, were cancelled and ex-*
 “ *terminated ; and till the Jesuits, by their arts,*
 “ *had diffused a general neglect and disregard of*
 “ *them among the Protestants* [1]. That not one
 “ of all those ancient writers had yet been can-
 “ celled, nor the least disregard to them diffus-
 “ ed by Jesuitical arts, through any Protestant
 “ country : whence it was evident to every man
 “ of sense, that the plot had utterly miscarried,
 “ from the very beginning, and that they were
 “ as remote from any dangers of it at this day,
 “ as their Fathers had been before them, and,

[1] See *Charge*, p. 9.

“ in short, that, from the first to the last, there
 “ never was, nor ever could be, any danger in
 “ it at all.”

If this alone, I say, had been urged in answer to his Charge, at the time when it was delivered, as it might have been with the strictest truth, it must needs have convinced the audience, that all the terrors with which the Arch-deacon had been alarming them, were but affected or imaginary, and his tragical representation of them a mere farce and piece of mockery, which the experience of fifty years, and of all Protestant Churches, had utterly confuted.

Again, we may observe, both from his *Charge and the Defence* of it, that *the Critics, the scholars, and the learned*, are supposed by him in general, to consider the Jesuit's Scheme as an *extravagant, impracticable, and senseless whim* [1], which is sufficient likewise of itself, to refute all pretence of danger from it. For if the learned be against it, who can be for it? The success of it must necessarily depend on the judgement of the learned; being a project of that kind, which the multitude can have no notion of, but from their testimony and recommendation. If it had offered to the public some refined point of doctrine, or principle of devotion, proper to excite a spirit of fanaticism or enthusiasm in weak and pious Christians, it might indeed have reached to the populace, and proved dangerous in the issue to the peace of our Church: but as it is a

[1] Def. p. 5, 6, &c.

question

question of dry criticism, without any such charm in it, and which learning alone must decide, the Protestants cannot possibly receive any hurt from it, till it be first authorised by the men of sense and learning of their own profession.

Yet the Archdeacon cannot help persuading himself, that the very populace are all attentive, and taking part in this dispute: for when Dr. M——n treats the Jesuit's Scheme as a *silly whim*, and worthy onely to be laughed at by men of sense; he reproves him with his usual gravity, and says, *that though he is so ignorant himself to be thus deluded, he must not expect, that even the multitude with us, are now to be so cajoled and blinded* [1]. For now, since his Charge is made public, he fancies, without doubt, that it is to be found on every stall in *London*; and that every soul, who can read, is let into the Secret of *Harduin's plot*, and admiring *the strength, and spirit, and perspicuity* of language, in which he has laid open all the dark designs, and *incredible mischiefs*, of this *Jesuit-Cabal*.

I have hitherto been attempting to shew, how all his proofs and evidences of the plot tend onely to contradict his own account of it: yet I have one testimony against it still behind, which he will own to be of more weight than all the rest; I mean the authority of his own dear Self: who, in one of his books, published some years ago, taking occasion to speak of *Father*

[1] Def. p. 14.

Harduin's Scheme, declares it to be both *paradoxical and insignificant* [1]. Such was his opinion of it, before he had cooked up the plan of his *Charge*. But the *insignificancy* of the thing, which would have discouraged any other man from meddling with it, was the very motive which prompted the Archdeacon to take it for his theme. He knew, that he could never display his wit and eloquence with such advantage, as by raising wonders out of nothing, and from an *insignificant paradox*, extorting the thanks and applauses of *several distinct assemblies of the Clergy*.

Being aware however, that he might be driven to give up the original Scheme of the Jesuit, as *stale and obsolete*, he had projected a retreat; to which he now recurs, and insists, *that one part of his story is so far from being stale, that it never came to light till 1733, and 1741*. Strange! that it should twice come to light within the compass of eight years, yet want to be brought to light a third time within five years more. But so it was, that *no advice or account had ever been given of it in the English tongue*, as he tells us, *by any one before himself, not even by the late ingenious improvers of M. Bayle's Dictionary* [2]. Here then he takes heart again, and begins to plume himself as much as ever, on the discovery of a second plot, “more directly subservient, “he says, to the Popish cause, and more malignant still to antiquity than the first; in con-

[1] Dr. C.'s Euseb. Vol. I. p. 343.

[2] Def. p. 12.

“ founding the history of 800 years, and in the
 “ open proscription even of the *Roman Digest*
 “ and *Codes, both Theodosian and Justinianean*, to
 “ make way for the *Papal Codes* and *Canon Law*:
 “ and moreover, in a general massacre of all the
 “ ancient writers and monuments of the Church,
 “ to the middle of the thirteenth century: and
 “ all this concluded with a daring abuse on the
 “ whole Greek text of the New Testament, as a
 “ version onely of the Vulgate Latin: which
 “ last was to be set up as the onely authentic
 “ text of the whole Scripture [1].”

This at last was *the Snake in the grass*, which he talks of; or the fatal and poisonous part of the Scheme, which had hitherto been kept out of sight. But when the head of the Snake was cut off, is it not childish to make an outcry of danger, because the tail seemed still to move? When the original Scheme had so long been exploded, and lost all power of doing mischief, is it possible, that any appendix, or fresh conceit, formed by the same Jesuit, and on the same principles, should give any just alarm, or excite the attention of men of sense? This new plot came *first to light*, he says, in 1733: let him tell us then, what hurt it has any where done for these fourteen years past. The capital mischief which it aims at, and by which alone Protestants can be affected, is, to deprive them of their *Greek copies of the New Testament*, and to slip *the Vulgate Latin* into their hands, as the more authentic text.

[1] Def. p. 13.

Yet

Yet it is certain, not onely, that no Protestant Church, but that no single Protestant in his senses has ever been induced to submit to such an exchange. Whatever then any Jesuit, or the whole body of them, may project or wish on this article, it must be wholly insignificant to Protestants; in whose custody the *Greek text* will always rest secure from the danger, of being either privately stolen, or forcibly extorted out of their hands.

But as silly as all this must necessarily appear to every sensible reader, we find him wonderful elate, on the merit of being the first discoverer of it; and insulting his Adversary upon it with much contempt, “was this too a tale, says he, “which deserved no alarm or regard among our “Clergy? And was this good Remarker so “fond of his *stales and obsoles*, for the sake of “making a little figure with them, that he “could onely attend to what was published “about forty years ago, and not hearken to the “more recent strokes of the Jesuit, and pass “them all over in the most profound silence? “The very mirror this of Protestant candor “and impartiality, towards both the Archdeacon and the Jesuit [1].”

But to return to *Father Harduin's* plot. Dr. M——n had affirmed of it in the Postscript, that *it was contemned particularly at Rome, as the delirium of a doting Critic*. On which the Archdeacon takes occasion to animadvert, in so re-

[1] Def. p. 13.

finéd

finer a strain, both of reason and raillery, that I must beg leave to transcribe the intire passage, because no abstract could possibly do justice to it. Take it then in his own words :

“ As to our Author’s particular information
 “ of the great contempt of *Father Harduin at*
 “ *Rome*, as if there his whole System was treat-
 “ ed, as a mere delirium of a doting Critic, it has
 “ no great weight with me in its present form,
 “ when I onely look back to some former in-
 “ formations, which were given us, of a certain
 “ *sine column near the Capitol at Rome* : nor do I
 “ think, that every man, who is curious in de-
 “ lineating and illustrating an old *Pballus* or *Pria-*
 “ *pus*, is immediately to be trusted, for explan-
 “ ing the genuin thoughts of *Italian Monastics*,
 “ or a *Roman Conclave*. Some indeed, I know,
 “ such as *Fontamini* and *Quirini*, have talked at
 “ *Rome*, with great freedom and abhorrence of
 “ *Harduin’s* projects, and I believe too with
 “ great sincerity and truth. But others may
 “ talk so to a Protestant Traveller, or to some
 “ tender Catholic consciences, though privately
 “ among confidants, they may hug and applaud
 “ the Scheme, and spur on the most vigorous
 “ prosecution of it,” &c. [1].

Here we see, how the Archdeacon, who never travelled farther, than from his College to *Lambeth*, professes to know, not onely what was said, but what was thought at *Rome*, yet will not allow Dr. M——n, who spent several months

[1] P. 23.

in

in that City, to be capable of giving any information, of what he had either seen or heard in it. *I know*, says he, *that such men as Fontanini and Quirini, talked with great abhorrence of Harduin's projects.* Very familiar truly! one would imagine him to be speaking of his intimate acquaintance. *Fontanini* was an Archbishop, of distinguished learning and politeness, whom Dr. M——n saw almost every day during his stay at *Rome*; and, by the advantage of his friendship, had the opportunity of many free conversations at his house, with persons of the first distinction, both for their quality and literature; and among the rest, with the Pope now reigning; and after he left *Rome* kept up a correspondence of letters with him, to the time of his death. But, what relates more to the present purpose, the character of *Harduin's* plot, which is said in the Postscript, to have obtained at *Rome*, of being the *delirium of a doting Critic*, is expressed in the very words, in which he received it from *Monsignor Fontanini*; whose known attachment and relation to that Court must persuade us, that he would not have used any language on that subject, which could possibly give offence there.

But the Archdeacon assigns two reasons, why Dr. M——n's informations from *Rome*, ought not to be credited. First, because the Dr. had given some false informations, it seems, before, concerning a certain fine column near the Capitol. It puzzled me a while to guess, what he could mean by

by this insinuation : for the Doctor had never given any information about any *column* whatsoever, nor ever heard of any *fine one*, near the *Capitol*, except the *Trajan and Antonin Columns*, which are not far from it. But I found upon recollection, that this dark hint related to a certain antique stone, of a Cylindrical form, with the names of about *thirty old Roman Legions* upon it, which Dr. M——n had transcribed, for the use of a former treatise, from a printed copy of some of the Editors of those antient Inscriptions : which transcript the Archdeacon was pleased to censure, as incorrect, because it differed from the copies of *the great Boissard and Gruter*, as he calls them, and unless they were mistaken, which he could not believe, the Doctor's copy had not given the true reading [1]. But whatever he may believe, or not believe, it is certain, that the one or the other, or both of them, more probably, were mistaken ; because they vary from each other, more than once or twice, in their different copies of the same inscription [2]. Yet whatever difference there may be in any copies, or whatever error in the Doctor's, the sole purpose, for which it was alledged by him, is evidently confirmed by them all.

It is pleasant however to observe, how the Archdeacon, out of a fondness for his criticism, grew fond of this old Stone, and erected it pre-

[1] See Dr. *Chapman's* and Brut. p. 427.
Letter annexed to Observa- [2] Boissard. Par. iii. 102.
tions on the Epistles of Cic. Grut. Inscr. p. 513.

fently

sently into a *Column*. I have so much regard, says he, for that *Column*, as to wish, that Dr. M——n had examined and represented it with a little more accuracy [1]: and, in this Defence, he has now dressed it up into a *fine Column*. Yet should we ask him of what Order, he would be puzzled how to answer; and more surprized still, if it should appear at last to be *no Column* at all, but a *Cylindrical Pedestal* of some military Statue, erected antiently upon it by the army, with the names of the several Legions inscribed, which had contributed to its dedication [2]. But whatever it might have been in its original form, yet at present, it has so little pretension to any sort of finery, that the rolling-stone in any garden would make just as *fine a Column*, if it were set upright onely, on either of its ends, and, if inscribed with the names of our standing regiments, as valuable a *Column* too.

But the Archdeacon's view in this reflection was, to shew how idly Dr. M——n had spent his time in *Rome*, by neglecting to bring back with him an accurate copy of this Inscription, from his own survey of it. And whatever shame may be due to him on that account, the Doctor, I dare say, will take it all to himself, and freely confess, that he never so much as saw, or made any inquiry after it. He knew, that it had been transcribed and published by several different hands, and was not invited either by any beauty of the stone, or curiosity of the in-

[1] See Dr. C.'s Letter, *Ibid.* [2] Gruter. *Ibid.*
scription,

scription, to spend any of his time about it. Yet he may venture to say without vanity, that he has given the public some *informations from Rome*, which it ill becomes an English Archdeacon to take such pains to discredit; and which, for their use and importance to the Protestant religion, have passed through several editions in our own country, as well as translations into the languages of other countries, where Protestants reside. The Papists indeed, and a few Zealots of our own Church, scarce worthy of the name of Protestants, have made it their business, as well as this Archdeacon, to decry Dr. M——n's *informations from Rome*; yet not a single article of them has ever been disproved by any: and when a Protestant Divine has the assurance, to warn people against them in this public manner, his zeal must flow from some secret motives of more weight with him, than his pretended regard either to the Protestant cause, or to an old Inscription, of no use or significancy to any cause whatsoever.

The second reason, which he gives for discrediting Dr. M——n's *informations from Rome*, is still more curious: because the Doctor, in a latin work, in which he had delineated and explained many original pieces of classical antiquity, from his own collection, had exhibited the figure of an old *Phallus and Priapus*. For such a man, he says, *is not to be trusted, for explaining the genuine thoughts of Italian Monastics, or a Roman Conclave*. Yet Dr. M——n has done nothing more

in this case, than what his great *Boissard* and *Gruter*: than what *Pignori*, *Begerus*, *Causæus*, *Bonanni*, *Montfaucon*, &c. in short, what every man, of what character, country, or religion soever, who has published collections of Antiquities, or undertaken to explaine the manners and rites of the Gentile world, had constantly done before him. And yet the Doctor, before he entered upon that particular argument, took care to guard himself from any just censure, and obviate all offence to his weaker readers, by premising the example, not onely of those learned moderns, but an authority still much greater, even of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, in whose words he has happened to explaine the very grossest part of his subject: so that whatever shame may be thought due to him, for the *illustration of this old Pballus*, it must finally rest upon them.

Such was the ground of the Archdeacon's censure, as far as I have been able to discover it; but as to the meaning of it, it is not in my power to find it out. All that I can pretend to say, of such a medley of strange words, as they are jumbled together in this paragraph, is, that his *fine Column*, *old Pballus*, *Italian Monasticks*, and *Roman Conclave*, make a composition of such *strong, spirited, and perspicuous* nonsense, as no other writer, but with the same vivacity of genius, and the same profundity of erudition, could possibly produce.

After

After he has thus vindicated himself, with regard to his discovery of the *Jesuit's plot*, and set forth his great services to the public, in alarming us so seasonably with the dangers of it, he proceeds, to do justice also to his friends, *the Tunstalls and the Marklands*, by clearing them from the suspicion of having any share in it. The warmth of his friendship would not suffer him, to overlook the least touch of mere railery, on persons so dear to him. He imagined presently that Dr. M——n took them to be real *Loyolites*, and actually engaged with the Jesuits abroad, and that he was representing them as such to the whole kingdom; upon which, he takes occasion, to make here a public and solemn declaration, *that he had never any thought at all, of impeaching them; that they bear no resemblance to the true Loyolites*, have none of the marks upon them, *and could not therefore be the object of his caveat* [1]: And from this outcry against them, as he calls it, he enters into a formal defence of all *the true and solid Critics*, whether living or dead, whether of our own or of foreign countries; whom he declares, “to deserve love
“and universal esteem, as the firmest supports of
“truth and erudition; while those furious
“Drawcansers, who proceed not by principles
“of criticism, but of party and policy, and
“would cut off at random, against all rules of
“true Critique, whole centuries of Authors, ecclesiastical and profane, and diffuse an univer-

[1] Def. p. 25, 26.

“ fal ſcepticiſm, as to monuments of antiquity,
 “ deſerve to be marked out, as peſts to the re-
 “ public of letters [1].”

Since then he has thought fit, to be ſo ſerious, on ſo ſlight an occaſion, I find myſelf obliged to be ſerious too, and to make a declaration alſo in my turn, on the part of Dr. *M*——*n*, that he had no real intention, any more than the Archdeacon himſelf, to impeach thoſe learned Gentlemen of any plot whatſoever; nor the leaſt deſign to defraud them of that *amiable* character, which they have acquired with ſo much pains and ſtudy, of *true and ſolid Critics*. But as no mortal can know the real motives of action in another; and as the evidence eſpecially of plots, turns not upon intentions, but overt-acts, ſo the whole, which I can declare of them with certainty is; that their late attempts againſt the works of *Cicero*, which bear ſome reſemblance of *the Jeſuit's plot*, and ſeem to flow from the ſame *malign ſpirit againſt the Antients*, have been found upon trial, to be perfectly innocent, and incapable of doing the leaſt hurt to any thing whatſoever; and will conſequently be as little known or regarded by the next generation, as the whimſical conceit of *Harduin* was by the preſent.

We are now come to the ſecond point, which the Archdeacon, as I have ſaid, is obliged to make good, if he would vindicate his *Charge*, from the exceptions of the *Poſtſcript*. He has

[1] P. 26.

declared

declared in that *Charge*, that the antient Fathers of the Church, and especially *the Clements, the Cbrysofoms, the Jeroms, and the Austins*, are an armoury, as he calls it, on the Protestant side, continually galling the Papists in some tender part, and exposing to every common eye, the unscriptural and unprimitive crudities of the Romish principles and practices [1]. In contradiction to which, it is affirmed by Dr. M——n in his *Postscript*, “ that
 “ the authority of those very Fathers, as it is
 “ recommended and enforced by the Arch-
 “ deacon, would betray us into Popery; and in
 “ particular, that *Cbrysofom, Jerom, and Austin*,
 “ had severally taught and practised, and warm-
 “ ly recommended to the practice of all Christi-
 “ ans, certain rites and doctrines, which, from
 “ their example and authority, are practised at
 “ this day by the Romish Church, but rejected
 “ by all Protestant Churches, as *unscriptural, su-
 “ perstitious, and idolatrous* [2].”

This is the subject of the dispute between the Author of *the Charge*, and the Author of *the Postscript*: the last of whom, in order to cut off all unnecessary wrangling, and to reduce the controversy to as short an issue, as the nature of a Postscript required, chose to refer the merit of it to a few facts and instances, drawn singly from *St. Jerom*, because, of all the Fathers, he perceived him to be the peculiar favorite of the Archdeacon. Now this method of proceeding

[1] See *Charge*, p. 2, 6.
 Introd. Disc. p. 68.

[2] *Postscript* of the

is clear and direct, and what every one would chuse to pursue, who seeks nothing but the truth : and, if that had been the Archdeacon's view, he ought to have given a direct answer to those facts ; or to have balanced them at least by opposite facts drawn from the same Father, strong and explicit in favor of the Protestant cause, as it stands opposed to that of the Papists.

But instead of this, the whole business of his *Defence* is, to draw us away from the real subject, and to amuse us with harangues quite foreign to it ; “ on the reverence due to primitive antiquity ; on the authority of the Fathers taken collectively ; on the public doctrine of the antient Churches ; and particularly, on the admirable abilities, innumerable excellencies, and treasures of learning to be found in *St. Jerom* ; in consideration of which, all their blemishes, failings, and peccancies ought to be overlooked ; and whatever they may have dropt of a *Papish* cast, there wants no apology for it, he says, nor is there any reason to expect, that he should be responsible for the errors or imprudences of a *Jerom*, because he is supposed to be a favorite with him [1].”

From this evasive way of treating the subject, and eluding the force of plain facts, one would be apt to imagine, that he was giving up the question, and yielding the cause to his Adver-

[1] *Jes. Cabal*, p. 34, 36.

fary : yet far from any such thought, he assures us, “ that all the facts and instances, which have
 “ been or can be produced from *St. Jerom*, or
 “ any of the Fathers, are nothing more than a
 “ *few slight trimmings of Popery*, which may in-
 “ deed receive some countenance from them,
 “ but that he will engage, from those Fathers
 “ alone, effectually to confute all the principal
 “ errors of the Romanists [1].” Why does he
 not do it then, and put an end to the contro-
 versy at once both with them and with me ?
 and why does he chuse to harangue still at
 large ; neither producing any facts on his own
 side, nor taking notice of those alledged on the
 other ; yet giving his adversary all the while,
 no other title, than that of a *Declamatory Re-*
marker ; though he grounds his whole argument
 on allowed facts, and requires a distinct answer
 to them, and refers the decision of the cause to
 the merit of that answer.

But what is still more shameful, he declares,
 “ that he never appealed to any of the Antient
 “ Fathers singly, nor in particular to *Chrysostom*,
 “ *Jerom*, or *Austin* ; for knowing well what he
 “ did, he appealed onely to the primitive Fathers
 “ at large, or to the whole body of them taken
 “ collectively, but that instead of *the Fathers in*
 “ *general*, which was his expreffion, the Gentle-
 “ man had flipt in, *Chrysostom*, *Jerom*, and *Austin*,
 “ to whom he did not appeal, nor ever intended
 “ to appeal [2].” And this indeed, if true,

[1] *Jef. Cabal*, p. 35.

[2] *Ibid.* 33, 34.

must needs be thought a slippery trick, to put such a change upon the good Archdeacon. Let us inquire then, how the case really stands; and whether this piece of craft, which he imputes to Dr. M——n, be not a proof onely of his greater disingenuity, and a fiction of his own, contrived to excuse himself from acting that mortifying part, which candor and truth prescribe, but his pride cannot submit to, of acknowledging himself confuted.

In the beginning of his *Archiadial Concharge*, where he opens the general plan of Father Harduin's plot, he speaks indeed, in general, of the *ancient Fathers*, as destined to destruction by that Jesuit, on account of their services to the Protestant cause [1]. Then, in describing the terrible havock which the plot had made among the writers of Antiquity, both Greek and Latin, he tells us, that *this was onely the introduction to the more daring stroke, by which the Clements, the Chrysostoms, the Jeroms, and the Austins, were to fall next in the Massacre, as being too eloquent and primitive for a Jesuit's palate* [2]. And lastly, when he comes to set forth the probability of its success, he says, *that the libertines and sceptics would of course rejoice in it, and give up even their favorites, Virgil and Horace, &c. on condition onely that the Jeroms might be sacrificed with them* [3]. Thus he first mentions *the ancient Fathers* at large, as an armoury on the Protestant side; then specifies what particular Fathers he means, as

[1] Charge, p. 2.

[2] Ib. p. 6.

[3] Ib. 22.

the most obnoxious on that account to the Jesuit ; and lastly, takes occasion to signify, that, of the four, whom he so specifies, *Jerom* was the most eminently and universally odious to all the enemies of Protestantism, both *Papists* and *Sceptics*.

This is his whole account of the ancient Fathers, with regard to their being *an armoury on the Protestant side*: and could any one, who was disposed to contest it with him, act more candidly and pertinently, than by referring the dispute, to the character of that single Father, on whom he himself lays the greatest stress? Or could any one, on the other hand, act more weakly and disingenuously, than he has done in the present case, by disclaiming an appeal to *any of the ancient Fathers singly*? For, in our controversy with the Papists, the whole collective body of them could not possibly have any weight, if each of them, taken singly, be found to have none at all: and if he dares not trust his cause to those particular Fathers, whom he himself has distinguished, *as the peculiar armoury of Protestants*, and declared, *to be grievous thorns in the sides of the Papists* [1], it is childish to pretend, that any accession of the rest, who are less useful to us, and less grievous to our enemies, could add any new strength to it. Yet thus he shuffles on; chusing to recur rather to any shift, and to deny even what he has said, than to give a di-

[1] *Jes. Cabal*, p. 35.

rect answer to facts, which would expose the folly and bigotry of his principles.

And to divert the attention of the reader from the merits of the cause, and raise his indignation at the same time against Dr. *M——n*, he makes a wretched outcry against him, for “disfiguring and depreciating the virtues and abilities of the ancient Fathers; exaggerating their failings and peccancies; casting the worst construction on their actions and sayings; painting them malignantly in the most hideous colors of folly, superstition, or knavery; and putting them to a worse torture, than their Heathen Persecutors had ever done, and to a fiery trial, which no writers in the world had ever suffered [1];” with a great deal more of the same declamatory stuff, for which Dr. *M——n* has given no other occasion, than by attempting to shew, from express testimonies and instances drawn from those Fathers, that their primitive practices and principles tend to confirm the present doctrines and worship of the Romish Church.

This is a pure question of fact, which has no relation to their virtues or abilities, or any other part of their character, than what is necessarily demonstrated by those same instances, collected from their works, on which the question itself depends. For example, if, in the course of our argument, they are found to affirm, either from their own knowledge or the report of

[1] *Jes. Cabal*, 42, 43.

others,

others, things manifestly false and utterly incredible ; what else can we possibly think, or say of them, but that, *if they believed such things, they were grossly credulous ; if not, were crafty or interested, in imposing the belief of them upon others ?* And how shining soever their abilities may be, this is no calumny, no exaggeration, no torture or fiery trial, but such a treatment of them, as justice and reason require, and what all writers have ever suffered and ought to suffer : and whoever forms a judgement of any Author, from any other principle, than what is grounded on the testimony of his writings, must necessarily judge from prejudice or party, or some other motive, which does not flow from the love of truth.

The Archdeacon, however, though he does not chuse to give any direct answer to those particular facts, which are alledged against him from St. *Jerom*, takes no small pains to clear the ancient Fathers in general, from the charge urged against them, of being the Authors of those *principal corruptions*, which are practised at this day by the Romanists, and condemned by the Protestants, as *unscriptural and superstitious*. Which corruptions he has collected from *the Introductory Discourse* into the eight following articles : 1. *The institution of Monckery.* 2. *The worship of reliques.* 3. *Invocation of Saints.* 4. *Prayers for the dead.* 5. *The superstitious use of Images.* 6. *Of the Sacrament.* 7. *Of the Sign of the Cross.* 8. *Of consecrated Oil* [1].

[1] *Jes. Cabal*, p. 28.

This

This poor list of primitive corruptions, and its eight articles, our Protestant Archdeacon derides, as trifling and impertinent; and of no consequence at all to us, whether they were practised or not, either by the Ancient or Modern Church of Rome. *These*, says he, *are all the great instances of agreement, which our Author can find between Popery and Antiquity: and what are these? Why, the facts and instances, which have been answered by Protestants over and over* [1]. And to justify his contempt of them, he touches here and there the chief of those arguments, which have so often been urged in answer to them. 1. *That though there are several passages in the Fathers, which seem to have a Popish cast, and to look a little Popishly affected, yet it may bear a dispute, as it has often done, whether the cases on both sides be similar* [2]. 2. *That it is another question, whether the Primitive Churches are chargeable, in these articles, with any leaven of Romish Superstition at all. Nay, he is sure, that we may appeal, in these very articles, to the practice of the ancient Churches, against the Church of Rome* [3]. 3. *That the usages of this kind are really nothing to the mimicry and fopperies of the later Popish rituals* [4]. 4. *That the articles here charged upon the Primitive Fathers, are not the principal corruptions of Popery; nor in truth any Popery at all, but only a few trimmings of Popery* [5].

[1] *Jes. Cabal*, p. 28. [2] *Ib.* 33, 35, 36. [3] *Ib.* 29. [4] *Ib.* 32. [5] *Ib.* 29, 35.

But

But if Popery, as he contends, was not yet in being, how could the Fathers add *trimmings* to it? Or if his meaning be, that they *trimmed up Christianity into the form and dress of Popery*; the onely sense that his words naturally convey, I shall readily agree with him, and cut short the dispute. But instead of allowing any thing so candid or sensible, he presents us with a different picture of Popery, and a genuin list of *its principal corruptions and crying abominations*, as he calls them, and defies any man to shew, *that so much as one of these ever appeared in any Christian Church before A.D. 440* [1]. Yet, should we grant all this, and whatever he can say of the same kind, to be true, it is nothing to the purpose, as the reader will easily perceive, by reflecting onely on the genuin nature of Popery, and the real state of our present quæstion.

For it must be remembered, that Popery is a system of a very complex and comprehensive kind, which could not possibly be formed at once, or brought to maturity, but by the gradual improvements of successive ages. The Primitive Fathers, and especially those of the fourth Century, were the Founders of it; sketched out the plan, laid a sure foundation, raised a great part of the Fabrick, and left sufficient funds and materials, for carrying on the rest to its full perfection. And we might with as much reason deny, that *Romulus*, and the Primitive Kings, who succeeded him, were the

[1] Jes. Cabal, 27, 28.

founders

founders of the ancient state of *Heathen Rome*, because they did not raise it to that height of power which it afterwards reached ; as that the primitive Fathers were the founders of the present state of *Popish Rome*, because they left a part of their work to be completed by their Successors. In both cases, the foundations were so effectually laid, and the plan carried so far into execution, that the rest would succede of course, if it was not totally deserted ; and from causes and principles, of a kind somewhat similar. For the Kings of old *Rome*, that they might secure their infant state, and enlarge its dominion, contrived such a system of laws and religious rites as would naturally excite a kind of fanatical zeal and enthusiastic fondness for them in the people, whom they trained at the same time in such bodily exercises, as were proper to confirm both their strength and their courage : by the united force of which principles, the Heathen world became subject to the power of that Republic. Thus also the Primitive Fathers, by the invention of certain rites and methods of devotion, with a severity of bodily exercises, and peculiar rules of life, which carried a form of sanctity, and were enforced by a pretence of miracles, infused into the multitude a spirit of zeal and superstition, too impetuous to be checked, by the opposition of calm reason, which gradually subjected the Christian world to the dominion of popish *Rome*.

This

This is a short sketch of the rise and progress of Popery. It drew it's birth from the primitive ages of the Church; was nursed by the Fathers of the same ages, especially of the fourth Century, and attained gradually to its present maturity, by the help chiefly of those articles, above recited, which were invented for that purpose, and zealously propagated by the same Fathers. The Archdeacon however is sure, *that even in these articles, we may appeal to the ancient Churches in opposition to the Romish Church*; and to prove the truth of what he says, has taken the pains to shew, in every one of them, how far the practice of the primitive Churches was different from the present practice of *Rome*: thro' all which therefore, it will be necessary for me to follow him, with a remark or two on each particular article.

The Substance of what he has thought fit to declare on the subject of these several articles, is as follows :

1. *That there were no Monks in the Church for near three hundred years; and when they were introduced, they were under no Popish vows or bonds; nor encroached on the rights of the Bishops and Clergy; nor held estates in mortmain; nor were the creatures and tools of the Popes of Rome.*

The reader will observe, that though our dispute principally turns on *the rites and doctrines of the fourth century*, which the Archdeacon has undertaken to vindicate, from a conformity with the present Superstitions of *Rome*, yet

yet in this first article of *Monkery*, he owns it to have been introduced even in the third century; with this difference onely, *that it was not yet under any Popish vovus; nor encroached on the rights of the Bishops; nor engrossed estates; nor was a tool to the Popes.* Now the fact is this, as it is represented by the Fathers themselves, that towards the end of the fourth century, there was such an amazing increase of the Monkish Order, through all parts of the Christian world, as makes it reasonable to believe, that there were greater numbers of Monks in the Church, in proportion to the extent of Christendom at that time, than are to be found in it even at this. Which was wholly owing to the zeal of those Fathers, who made it their business to recommend and extol the Monastic state, as the perfection of a Christian life, and the very pattern of an heavenly one. These Monks lived also then, as they do now, in Monasteries, founded for their sole use and reception, and under a solemn profession, or vow of perpetual chastity; voluntary, as we may imagine, at first; till, by their frequent violations of it, they were gradually tied down by more strict and forcible restraints. And if they did not immediately *encroach on the rights of others, and engross estates, or become tools of the Popes;* yet such effects were sure to follow from the very nature of their institution: for it is not possible, that such numerous societies of beggarly, crafty, ambitious spirits, recommended by a reputation of wonderful

derful sanctity, could long subsist without acquiring both rights and estates, and attaching themselves to that power, which was the best able to protect them in such usurpations. And we find accordingly, that they made it their care, from the very beginning, to seduce the heirs of rich families into their Monasteries, against the will, and to the utmost grief, of their parents, and to conceal them there, from the knowledge and search of their friends. Nor are we to suppose, that any of their later encroachments are derived from any written statutes or rules, by which modern Monks are governed, in distinction from the ancient, but from such arts onely, as experience would teach of course, and tacitly prescribe to all societies of the same kind.

2. *That there were no invocations of Saints or Angels in the three first centuries; and even in the fourth, the addresses to them, were more like rhetorical Apostrophes (such as that of Dr. M——n to Dr. Woodward) than formal petitions: and no prayers to them were admitted in the public Offices of the Church, before A. D. 500.*

On this article it is allowed by the Archdeacon, that in the fourth century, such Addresses were made to Saints and Angels, and such religious honors paid to them, which, within a few generations after, produced a direct worship, and a *formule of prayers to them in the common Liturgies of the Church*. But here he has met with a lucky occasion, as he fancies, of distinguishing

guishing all this away, and giving a stroke at the same time to Dr. M——n, which must needs strike him dumb, by shewing, that the addressees paid to Saints, in the fourth century, were nothing more, than *such rhetorical Apostrophes*, as the Doctor himself had applied, in a certain latin speech, to his deceased friend Dr. Woodward. As if such little attempts of Oration, or fallies of fancy, made to enliven a latin oration, in an Assembly of Scholars, could bear any analogy to the religious addressees paid to Saints, on bended knees and in a supplicant posture, in Churches dedicated to their names, and before their Altars, and their reliques, according to the manner of that century. But whatever wit or smartness there may be in the application, it is wholly borrowed from a printed pamphlet, in which the same turn is given to the *Saint-worship* of those primitive ages.

3. *That the Popish worship of reliques cannot be found in the Orders of the Church, before the middle of the fourth century: and that it was not made an article of faith, and added to the Apostle's Creed, till the time of Pope Pius IVth: a presumption unknown to the Antient Churches.*

Here again we find an identity of practice, in the primitive Church of the fourth century, and the present Church of Rome, in one of the most offensive and grossest superstitions of all Popery. Which though not formally declared to be *an article of faith*, in those ancient times, yet was believed as firmly, and had the same effect,
as

as an article of faith, in all times, or it could not otherwise have obtained so universal an establishment. And, to say the truth, a worship confirmed by a perpetual succession of miracles, had a just claim to be treated as such, in all ages and Churches, where those miracles were believed to be true.

4. *That the superstitious use of Images was never heard of in the primitive times; nor can any one Father of the fourth century be produced to favor it.*

It is certain however, that *Images* were introduced into the Churches in the fourth century, and, as St. *Austin* expressly declares, found *many adorers of them* in that age [1]. And in the following ages, it is notorious, that the worship of them was practised and propagated by all the Fathers. Yet in the fourth century I have met with a story, which seems to confute the Arch-deacon's peremptory assertion, on this article, by the authority of one of the most illustrious Fathers of that time, even *the great St. Basil*. The story is this, "that as that venerable Father was fervently praying before *the Image of the blessed Virgin*, to which there was annexed also a picture of *St. Mercurius the Martyr*, he received a divine revelation from the picture of that Saint, by which it was signified to him, that *Julian the Apostate*, for whose destruction he was then particularly putting up his pray-

[1] See Introd. Disc. p. 21.

“ers, was in that very instant of time actually destroyed [1].”

5. *That the superstitious abuses of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which are charged in the Introductory Discourse, on the Fathers of the fourth century, are tales quite foreign to the purpose; of mixing the water with wine, and sending the consecrated elements to the absent, and the like: since no Popish distinction of seven Sacraments; no Transubstantiation; adoration of the Host, and propitiatory Sacrifices of the Mass are brought to light from that quarter.*

Yet besides those tales, which he calls foreign to the purpose, it is shewn in the same place, though he omits to take notice of it, that such notions and usages prevailed, in that age, with regard to this Sacrament, as were but very little short of the Popish rites and doctrines just specified; and within a few ages afterwards actually produced them. For example, this Sacrament was then held to be *a tremendous mystery, dreadful even to Angels*; and constantly styled *the Sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ*, and offered up as such, both for the dead and the living, over the tombs and ashes of departed Saints and Martyrs: which was either the same thing, with what is now called the *propitiatory Sacrifice of the Mass*, or at least a very near approach to it. The consecrated bread likewise, was locked up in boxes, and carried about by private Christians, as a charm, or preservative

[2] Joh. Damascen. Op. T. i. p. 327. E. Edit. Par.

against

against all dangers, and believed to work miracles, and drive Devils out of haunted houses; and in short, to perform such astonishing wonders, that it was not possible to take it any longer for mere bread, but something apparently divine and worthy of adoration; and transubstantiated consequently into the real body of Christ, for nothing else could naturally flow from these principles and practices of the fourth century.

6. *That prayers for the dead were in use indeed among the primitive Christians; but not such, as the Papists now use, for the relief of Souls in Purgatory; because the doctrine of a Purgatory was not established till after the fourth century: and the testimonies alledged in favor of it, from Tertullian and Origen, were only the private opinions of those Fathers, not the general doctrine of the Church.*

Here the superstitious practice of *praying for the dead*, is acknowledged to have been used by the Primitive Christians, as it certainly was, from the earliest ages, after the days of the Apostles. The purpose of it, as it is declared by *Tertullian* and *Origen*, was to procure some relief and refreshment to departed Souls, in an intermediate state of expiatory pains [1]. And though the Church had not yet publicly avowed the doctrine of such a purgatorial state, yet from the general practice of *praying for the dead*, we may certainly infer a general persuasion of it, as the principle, on which the practice itself

[1] *Introd. Disc.* 18, 19.

was grounded. Which seems even demonstrable, not onely from the testimonies of *Tertullian* and *Origen*, but from the actual establishment of a *Purgatory*, which within a short time after was openly avowed, as the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Let the Archdeacon therefore invent what distinctions he pleases, it will be evident to all men of sense, that *the doctrine of a Purgatory*, with all the lucrative effects, which have since been derived from it to the Popish Church, was directly founded on the usages of the fourth century.

7. *That the ill uses of the Sign of the Cross, and of oil, were unknown to the Pastors and offices of the Church for near three hundred years. In baptism indeed, and in sickness, they had a ceremony of anointing with oil, and hoped in some instances for miraculous cures from it; yet these and other primitive usages of the same kind were nothing to the mimicry and fopperies of the later Popish rituals.*

In these two last articles, all that he pretends to declare is, that the abuses of them were unknown to the primitive Church for near three hundred years; whereas his argument required, that they should have continued unknown to the end at least of four hundred. Yet from his own account of them, we may collect, that such abuses of them were actually introduced within these three hundred years, as would necessarily create all the rest. For instance, *they anointed sick persons with oil*, in the primitive Church, and expected *miraculous cures* from it. They do
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the very same thing at this day in the Romish Church, and with the same expectation : and in both Churches, miracles are said to be wrought by it, as the ground of that expectation. The only difference is, *that the Romish Church has made a Sacrament of this Unction, which the Primitive Church never thought of.* But this is a difference of opinion, not of practice. And if miracles be really wrought by it, I see no absurdity in giving that name to it ; and am sure, that, among the Protestants, all those, who draw their religious principles from the same source of *Primitive Antiquity*, must readily allow it to be a *Sacrament*. Then as to *the Sign of the Cross*, it is affirmed likewise to have wrought many great miracles, in the fourth century ; *to have driven away Devils every where before it ; to have thrown open gates, which were shut against it ; to have been imprinted miraculously on people's garments.* And though the Archdeacon would persuade us, that usages of those times were nothing, to the mimickry and fopperies of the later *Popish rituals* ; yet, on the contrary, it is reasonable to believe, as well from the nature of the thing, as the testimonies of the Fathers themselves, that with regard to this article of *the Cross*, the fopperies of the Romish Church are much less extravagant, than those of the primitive ages ; when it's miracles were fresh, and it's devotion ran high ; and when every Christian, as *Tertullian* says, was possessed with such superstitious notions about it, that he could not

take a single step, even in private and domestic life ; *could not go out of his house, or come in ; put on his cloaths, or his shoes ; could not bathe, eat, light up a candle ; go to bed, or sit down ; till he had first marked his forehead with the sign of the Cross* [1].

Thus we see at last, how every thing, which is asserted, in *the Introductory Discourse*, on the subject of these Articles, is confirmed by the Archdeacon's own account of them. It is declared in that *Discourse*, that, in the *third, fourth, and fifth centuries*, all those several corruptions, were either actually introduced, or the seeds of them so effectually sown, that they could not fail of producing the fruits, which we now see in the *Romish Church*. And nothing could more directly illustrate the truth of it, than what he himself has here offered in contraction to it. He tells us, that this or that article was unknown to the third century, yet allows it at the same time to have been common in the fourth ; or, if unknown still to the fourth, that it was practised in the fifth : or, if it had not reached its full maturity in any of those ages, yet from the seeds of it then sown, it became ripe and flourishing within a short time after. Which is the whole that Dr. M——n can be reasonably understood to mean, when he charges the present corruptions of *Rome*, to the principles and practices of the *Primitive Fathers*.

[1] *Intro. Disc.* 19, 20.

But

But in the article of *Reliques*, the Archdeacon has introduced a very remarkable testimony, which I omitted to take notice of in that place, because it seemed to require a more particular consideration: I mean the authority there alledged by him of *a late Great Prelate, Archbishop Wake, who did not scruple, he says, to declare, that as to the honors, due to the genuin reliques of the Martyrs or Apostles, no Protestant would ever refuse whatever the primitive Churches paid to them* [1]. I did not think it strange, that what-an Archbishop had not scrupled to declare, an Archbishop's Chaplain should not scruple to defend, yet could not help wishing, that they had both of them been more scrupulous in the present case: because I take it to be evident, as well from the dictates of reason as of religion, that how *genuin soever the reliques of the Martyrs or Apostles* may be, or whatever honors may have been paid to them by the primitive Church, no honors at all can be due to them from any Christian, out of any other principle, than of mere policy, or superstition: the truth of which I shall endeavour to illustrate, by sketching out a brief account of the rise and progress of *relique-worship* from the earliest ages of the Church.

Within a short time after the death of Christ, *St. Stephen*, one of the most eminent of the first disciples, became the *first Martyr* of the Christian Church. He was condemned to die by the great Council of the Jews, and *stoned to death ac-*

[1] *Jes. Cab.* 29, 30.

cordingly; and after his execution, *was carried to his burial by devout men, who made great lamentation over him* [1]. This is the summ of what we read in the Gospel, on the subject of his Martyrdom; in which *his blood is said to have been shed*, yet no care taken, to preserve the least drop of it, or any fragment of his skull, or bones, or cloaths, which might probably have been broken or rent by the violence of such a death. The piety of those *devout men*, who carried him to his grave, reached no farther in those days, than to the natural and necessary office of giving him a decent burial, and lamenting the cruel and undeserved fate of so excellent a person, and zealous champion of the Christian faith: Nor do we read any where, of an *anniversary Festival* appointed after his death, and celebrated afterwards at his Tomb, by the Apostles, or their Successors, *on the day of his Martyrdom*.

Thus the body of this great and first of the Christian Martyrs rested in its grave, undisturbed, unknown, and unheard of, for about three hundred years; when it is said to have been discovered, *by a revelation from heaven*, in the fourth century: an age, in which the devotion of the Church was principally turned towards *the reliques of its Martyrs*. The fame of this miraculous discovery was soon spread through the Christian world by the Pilgrims, who visited *Jerusalem*; whence they brought away some lit-

[1] Acts viii. 2. xxii. 20.

the portions of *the reliques* of this Saint; for the reception of which, several *Chapels or Oratories* were built in different countries, which, according to the custom of those days, were called *the Memories* of those particular Martyrs, whose reliques were deposited in them. Some of this kind were built for *the reliques of St. Stephen in Africa*; where they are affirmed to have wrought daily miracles, of the most amazing and illustrious kind; several of which are particularly recorded and attested by *St. Austin*, from his own knowledge [1]: whose authority, with that of the other Fathers, who relate much the same stories, of *other reliques* and *other miracles* wrought by them in different countries, is the very pattern, as well as the support of the present *relique-worship* in the Church of *Rome*. If therefore the authority of a late Archbishop, now enforced by our Archdeacon, should induce us, to pay the *same honors to the bones of Martyrs, which were paid to them by the primitive Church*, it would plunge us at once into the very depths of Popery.

But it may be said perhaps, that though the Archdeacon's argument necessarily includes *the fourth Century*, within the notion of the primitive Church, yet the Archbishop's declaration must not be understood, to have reached so far, but be restrained to the earlier ages only, which succeeded immediately to that of the Apostles.

[1] De Civ. Dei, l. xxii. c. 8. § 20, 11.

Let us inquire then, how far this limitation will justify it, and what honors were paid, even by the earliest Churches, to the reliques of their Martyrs. We have already seen, how, in the days of the Apostles, there does not appear to have been the least care or thought, about preserving any *reliques of the first Martyr Stephen*; nor after the rites of burial, any honors paid to him, but what are paid of course, to every virtuous and excellent man, by a pious and affectionate remembrance of his name and sufferings. Yet in the very next age, and within a few years after the death of *St. John*, the last of the Apostles, the devotion of the Church began to take a superstitious turn, in this very article: as we may collect from the antient narratives of the Martyrdoms of two, the most celebrated Disciples of that Apostle, *Ignatius* and *Polycarp*, which were written at the time of their execution, and by persons who attended it.

Ignatius, then Bishop of *Antioch*, was exposed to the wild beasts, in the Amphitheatre at *Rome*; on which occasion, it was his earnest prayer to God, *that the beasts might devour his body so intirely, that no remains of it should be left, to give his friends the trouble of gathering them.* And he obtained his wish so far, as the narrative informs us, *that none but the greater and harder of his holy bones remained*; yet these were gathered up, and carried to *Antioch*, and there wrapped up in linen,

as an inestimable treasure, left to the Church, by the grace, which was in the Martyr [1].

In the relation also of the Martyrdom of Polycarp, who was burnt alive, some years after, at Smyrna, it is said: "that his friends gathered up his bones, more precious than the richest jewels, and tried above gold, and deposited them in a proper place, where they proposed to assemble themselves together, as oft as the Lord would give them opportunity, to celebrate the birth-day of his Martyrdom [2]."

Such were the beginnings of the honors, paid to the reliques of the Martyrs, soon after the days of the Apostles: which superstition continued gradually to increase, in proportion as the Church itself increased in strength and numbers, till it reached its full height upon the conversion of the Roman Empire; when the whole Christian world seemed to be running mad, as it were, with an enthusiastic zeal for the reliques of Saints; urged on and inflamed by the authority and eloquence of all the principal Fathers of that age. Thus Chrysostom, haranguing on the praises of St. Ignatius, to the people of Antioch, with whom his reliques were deposited; "God, says he, took him from you for a short time, but restored him with greater glory: and as those, who borrow money, pay it back again with interest, so God, after he had bor-

[1] See Relation of the Archbishop Wake, § 12.

Martyrdom of St. Ignat. [2]. See dict. of St. Polycarp, § 8.

"rowed

“rowed this pretious treasure of you for a little
 “while, and shewn it to the City of *Rome*, sent
 “it back again with the greater lustre. You
 “sent him out a Bishop, but received him a
 “Martyr: You sent him out with your prayers,
 “but received him with crowns. And not one-
 “ly you, but all the Cities on the road: for
 “how were they all affected, think you, to see
 “his reliques brought back? What pleasure,
 “what exultation of joy did they express?
 “What acclamations of praise did they send
 “forth from all sides on the crowned Martyr [1].”
 And about the end of the fourth century, as
Euagrius relates, “the Emperor *Theodosius* was
 “moved by a suggestion from God, to do some
 “greater honors to this Martyr, by translating
 “his bones with great pomp and solemn pro-
 “cession, from the place, where they were first
 “deposited, without the City, into a temple
 “within it, which was consecrated on that oc-
 “casion to the memory of *St. Ignatius*: whose
 “annual Festival was rendered still more splen-
 “did and magnificent by *Gregory*, Bishop of
 “that City [2].”

Here then we see, what was the practice of
 the primitive Church, with respect to *reliques*,
 from the earliest ages. And after this view of
 it, if we should beg our Archdeacon, to inform
 us a little more precisely, what part a Protestant
 ought to act in this case; whether with the first

[1] Oper. Tom. ii. p. 600. Edit. Benedict. [2] Lib. i.
c. 16.

Christians,

Christians, in the days of the Apostles, he ought to observe *a perfect indifference or neutrality about them*, neither honoring nor insulting them; or with the first Christians, after the Apostles, *gather them with a religious care; wrap them up in silk, or fine linen, deposit them in sacred places, treat them as the most precious jewels, and inestimable treasures of the Christian Church*; he would stick, I dare say, to his text; exhort us to follow the example of the primitive Churches; and cheerfully to perform, what the authority of those purest ages had sanctified: nor would he have any scruple, about pushing our zeal too far; for he, who to the disgrace of Protestantism, has strenuously defended the grossest superstitions, and most despicable impostures of the fifth century, cannot possibly be scandalised by the less obnoxious practices of the fourth.

I cannot conclude these remarks, without reminding the reader once more, that the reason of my appealing singly to *St. Jerom*, was, not to gain any particular advantage to my argument, by selecting a character the most liable to exception; but on the contrary, to shorten the dispute, by offering one of the best and most valued characters of all the Antient Fathers, as a pattern or test, by which the merits of the rest shall be determined. For if a person of his superior parts and learning, distinguished by the severity of his life, as well as his piety, and zeal for the honor of the Gospel, could either be imposed upon himself by forged miracles, or knowingly

ingly impose them upon others, for the sake of recommending those superstitious rites, which are now practised by the Church of *Rome*, we need not look any farther; the same charge will easily be admitted, as it may more easily be proved against the rest. For which reason, I shall here add one short story more, from our own history, which occurs now to my memory, and may serve as a fresh illustration, of what I have before affirmed, concerning the nature and effect of his writings and principles.

At the time of the Reformation, *Dr. John Storie*, an eminent Civilian, and bigotted Papist, who, in *Queen Mary's* reign, had been a chief instrument of *Bp. Bonner's* butcheries of the Protestants, fled into *Flanders* upon the accession of *Q. Elizabeth*; where he was seized by stratagem, and brought a Prisoner into *England*, and executed afterwards at *Tybourn*, for the conspiracies and invasions of this kingdom, which he had been projecting and soliciting abroad: and being admonished at the time of his execution, to declare somewhat concerning his religion, he chose to say nothing more, than that he *died in the faith of St. Jerom*. This he took to be a sufficient declaration of it; and for this, he has ever since been considered as a *Saint and Martyr* at *Rome*; where his martyrdom was printed, and represented in the English College of that City [1]. But if *Jerom* after all, as the Arch-deacon tells us, be really *on the Protestant side*,
 [1] See Strype's Annals of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. p. 522.
 and

and a grievous thorn in the sides of the Papists, it is incumbent on him, to correct the mistake of our Historians, as well as the insolence of the Romanists, and to do justice to the memory of this celebrated Doctor, by reclaiming him, as a Martyr of our own Church, and as true a Protestant as himself; having sacrificed his life in the defence of that *pure and primitive Christianity*, which he is now so zealously recommending.

But the Archdeacon, as we find, will not be provoked to give an answer to any facts, which relate to *St. Jerom*: all, which he has thought fit to say to them, amounts to little more than this; “that *Jerom* was a wonderful scholar and fine writer, and though he had some blemishes and peccancies, yet they were too trifling to want any apology: and for his own part, that he highly esteems those primitive teachers and defenders of Christianity, whose works he has read with attention, in order to *judge fairly and accurately* of Christian antiquities, by the lights which he received from them: and that a modern scholar, who should scorn to accept their Assistance, would make but a *sorry kind of figure* in the republic of letters [1].”

How *fairly and accurately* his attentive study of the Fathers has taught him to judge of Christian antiquities, the reader will easily perceive, from the conclusion, which he has drawn from it, to the great comfort of Protestants; that *all those primitive Saints in general, and St. Jerom in parti-*

[1] See Def. p. 36, 40, 41, 42.

cular,

cular, are an armoury on our side, perpetually galling the Papists, in some tender point, and exposing to every common eye the unscriptural and unprimitive crudities of their principles and practices [1]. And how useful also the same study is, in qualifying a man, to make a figure in the world, is evident likewise, from the great fame and honors, which this same Archdeacon has raised to himself on that sole foundation.

If this then be the case, and if such advantages really flow from the study of those Antients, the Papists have great reason to expostulate with him, for the injustice offered to their religion, by the very Title of his Charge; *Popery the bane of true letters*. For whatever we have to say against Popery, it is notorious, that it is more immediately connected with *the study of the Fathers*; and has done much more towards promoting it in the Christian world, than Protestantism: and that one single Order of Monks has published more beautiful, correct and useful editions of their works, than all the Protestant countries together have ever done: so that by his own principles, Popery, instead of being called the *bane*, ought to be called, the *basis of true letters*; or the only school, whose scholars are rightly qualified, *to make a figure in the republic of letters*.

But this character of Popery, as it is signified by his Title, is not a contradiction onely to his own principles, but, what is still worse, seems

[1] See Charge, p. 2.

contrary likewise to truth, and the experience of those, who have visited Popish countries; in many of which, the liberal arts and sciences are known to flourish in an eminent degree; and their Cities to abound with noble and useful libraries, open and accessible to all, while the richest and largest of all Protestant Cities is shamefully destitute of them. When we write therefore against Popery, let us be so candid, as to give it its due; for when we have so much truth on our side, it is a shame to recur to lies: we may call *its doctrines, absurd; its rites, paganish; its worship, idolatrous*; we may call it, *a system of craft and policy*, contrived to enslave the Christian world to the dominion of *the Romish Church*: but when we ascribe to it what is false, we expose ourselves to the just contempt of the Romanists themselves, and instead of discrediting their religion, give them a bad specimen of our own.

A
VINDICATION
OF THE
FREE INQUIRY
INTO THE
MIRACULOUS POWERS,
Which are supposed
To have subsisted in the **CHRISTIAN CHURCH, &c.**
From the **OBJECTIONS** of
Dr. DODWELL and Dr. CHURCH.

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

FREE INQUIRY, &c.

DR. *Dodwell* takes occasion to acquaint us, in his Preface, *that his performance was not intended for the public view, but the perusal onely of a private friend; till being communicated to several others, whose judgement he had great reason to value, it was committed to the press by the unanimous advice of them all.* Dr. *Church* also, after the example of his partner, could not deny himself the pleasure of declaring; that *he likewise had the honor of receiving the approbation of some eminent, learned, and judicious persons, who had taken the trouble of revising his papers, and advised him to offer them to the public.* This method of puffing their works *a priori*, so flattering to the generality of our writers, is a sort of pride, which I cannot assume to myself; who have no man's judgement to trust to, but my own; no *Clerical Synod* to call around me; no *Episcopal Oracle* to consult. I am acquainted, indeed, with many of the Clergy, whom I highly esteem; and whose advice might be

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useful

useful to me on several occasions; if the subjects, which I have chosen to defend, did not forbid me to seek it: for their sakes, I mean, not for my own; lest the suspicion of any communication with me, might hurt their fame or fortunes, and expose them to the same envy, which I myself have incurred. For heterodox opinions in the Church, like treasonable words in the State, impart a guilt even to the hearer, and make him an accomplice in the crime, unless he purge himself by a discovery, and impeachment of the author.

But to return to our Doctors; it is certainly a mere impertinence, to talk of the approbation given to their books, before they had passed through the press, since their merit can onely be ascertained by the success of that passage, and the reception, which they may afterwards find, not from a cabal of private friends, but from the general voice, and judgement of men of sense; unprejudiced, and unbiaſſed with regard to the point in dispute. And here again, I must own, these Doctors have received an honor, which I can never hope to obtain, from the public testimonial of a great and famous University, to whose judgement I have ever been disposed to pay the highest regard. On this indeed, they have great reason to plume themselves; but would have had much greater, if that learned Body could stamp the truth of opinions by the same seal, with which it stamps diploma's, and confers honors on the Authors of them. For

in the present case, it has fallen out very unluckily both to those, who conferred these honors, and to those also, who now wear them; that even before the collation of them, one of the very books, on the account of which they were given, was effectually confuted, and, in every article relating to the main question, shewn to be wholly trifling and impertinent; and incapable of adding the least advantage to the cause which it defends, or of doing the least hurt to that which it had undertaken to overthrow. And the confutation of either of the two Doctors may be applied very justly to them both: for in the more bulky volume of the Second, we find nothing more than some little enlargement of the same arguments and objections, the same cavils and evasions, which we meet with in the First.

Now these, I say, are substantially confuted by Mr. *Toll*; a Clergyman of *Hampshire*, bred, I suppose, in the same University; and who would have been a credit to any, though not yet honored with any *Diploma*, nor likely to reap any other reward for his pains, than what an honest mind and honest fame will be sure to give to his disinterested defence, of what he takes to be true, in an Inquiry of so small importance to the Christian Church.

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thers, and their miracles, had been a little more patient, and not hurried it on, to crown its champions before the victory; and by giving its sanction to opinions still in dispute, to make itself a party in a controversy; which may possibly end, as many have done, to the mortification of those, who have ventured to give judgement in it, before both sides have been heard.

These Doctors begin with an examination of my Preface; wherein I had laid down a few general principles, which might be of use, as I imagined, to prepare the reader to form a right judgement on the subject of the *Free Inquiry*. But here, they meet with many passages, which greatly offend and puzzle them; some as carrying a suspicious meaning; others, a dangerous one; and others as wholly unintelligible, and having no meaning at all [1]. Yet these passages, as they own, have no relation to the question in dispute; and the sole use which they make of them, is, to give them an invidious turn, and charge them with pernicious tendencies, in order to prepossess the reader with an odious opinion of my character and principles, and, by consequence, a favorable one of the zeal and piety in exposing them, and to warn all good Christians of that poison, which I was covertly intending to infuse. Yet the meaning of these very places will appear, I dare say, to every candid reader, to be both clear, and inoffensive;

[1] Dod. 5, 13, 15. Ch. Pref. vii. 17.

cloathed

cloathed with no affected obscurity, nor carrying any other sense, than what I shall ever be ready to avow and openly defend.

For instance; I have said, that this question concerning the miraculous powers of the Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced by those powers, and of the witnesses, who attest them. Then, after some reasons given, why the credibility of facts ought generally to have more weight with us, than the credibility of witnesses, I conclude the paragraph in these words; “The testimony therefore of facts, as it is offered to our senses, in this wonderful fabric and constitution of worldly things, may properly be called the testimony of God himself: as it carries with it the surest instruction in all cases, and to all nations, which in the ordinary course of his providence, he has thought fit to appoint for the guidance of human life [1].”

There is another passage or two of a similar kind, and of equal offence to these doctors, in which, after censuring the rashness of forming peremptory arguments, as my adversaries are apt to do, upon the supposed necessity or propriety of a divine interposition, in this or that particular case, I add; “that the whole, which the wit of man can possibly discover, either of the ways or will of the Creator, must be acquired by a contrary method; not by imagining vainly within ourselves, what may be proper

[1] Free Inq. Pref. p. 10.

“ or

“ or improper for him to do, but by looking
 “ abroad, and contemplating what he has actu-
 “ ally done, and attending seriously to that re-
 “ velation, which he has made of himself from
 “ the beginning, and placed continually before
 “ our eyes, in the wonderfull works and beau-
 “ tiffull fabric of this visibible world [1].” A-
 gain, in conformity with this principle, I ob-
 serve, “ how fallacious the judgement even of
 “ the wisest men has been, and ever will be,
 “ when, deserting this path of nature and expe-
 “ rience, and giving the reins to fancy and con-
 “ jecture, they attempt to illustrate the secret
 “ counsels of Providence [2].”

These are the passages which chiefly offend them, they declare them to be crude, unguarded, alarming expressions, big with dangerous insinuations, inconsistent with my own concessions, that they prove too much, and seem to assert the impossibility of all miracles; so as to have made one of my Answerers believe, and all the rest of them suspect me, to be a Deist, nay that it cannot be excused from open Deism, from which therefore I ought to purge myself [3]. Since I am called upon then so solemnly, to explaine myself on the subject of these passages, I shall take this occasion to open them a little more particularly, and declare my real view in them, tho' persuaded at the same time,

[1] Free Inq. Pref. p. 22. Ch. p. 75.

[2] Free Inq. Pref.

p. 20. [3] Ch. vii. 17, 65.

that

that no explication of them can be wanted by any disinterested reader, as well as that none, which I shall give, will ever satisfy these Doctors, who now demand it.

One of them appears to be scandalised, by the title of *Revelation*, which I have given, to that discovery, which God made of himself in the visible works of his creation. Yet it is no other, than what the wise in all ages have given to it: who consider it as the most authentic and indisputable revelation, which God has ever given of himself from the beginning of the world to this day. It was this, by which the first notice of him was revealed to the inhabitants of the earth; and by which alone it has been kept up ever since, among the several nations of it. From this the reason of man was enabled, to trace out his nature and attributes, and by a gradual deduction of consequences to learn his own nature also, with all the duties belonging to it, which relate either to God, or his Fellow creatures. This constitution of things was ordained by God as an universal Law or rule of conduct to man; the source of all his knowledge; the test of all truth: by which all subsequent revelations, which are supposed to have been given by God in any other manner, must be tried and cannot be received as divine, any farther than as they are found to tally and coincide with this original standard.

It

It was this divine law, which I referred to, in the passages above recited, being desirous, to excite the reader's attention to it, as it would enable him to judge the more clearly and freely of the argument, which I was handling. For by contemplating this law, he would discover the genuine way, which God himself has marked out to us for the acquisition of true knowledge, not from the authority, or the reports of our fellow creatures, but from the information of the facts, and material objects, which, in his providential distribution of worldly things, he hath presented to the perpetual observation of our senses. For as it was from these, that his existence and nature, the most important articles of all knowledge, were first discovered to man, so, that grand discovery furnished new light towards tracing out the rest, and made all the inferior subjects of human knowledge the more easily discoverable to us by the same method.

I had another view likewise in the same passages, and applicable to the same end, of giving the reader a more enlarged notion of the question in dispute, who, by turning his thoughts to reflect on the works of the Creator, as they are manifested to us in this fabric of the world, could not fail to observe, that they were all of them great, noble, and suitable to the majesty of his nature; carrying with them the proofs of their origin, and shewing themselves to be the productions of an allwise and almighty

ty Being : and by accustoming his mind to these sublime reflections, he will be prepared to determine, whether those miraculous interpositions, so confidently affirmed to us by the Primitive Fathers, can reasonably be thought to make a part in the grand scheme of the divine administration ; or whether it be agreeable, that God, who created all things by his will, and can give what turn to them he pleases by the same will ; should, for the particular purposes of his Government and the service of the Church, descend to the low expedient of visions, and revelations ; granted sometimes to boys, for the instruction of the Elders, and sometimes to women, to settle the fashion and length of their veils, and sometimes also to the Pastors of the Church, to injoin them to ordain one man a lecturer, another a Priest ; or that he should scatter a profusion of miracles around the stake of a Martyr ; yet all of them vain and insignificant, and without the least sensible effect, either of preserving the life, or easing the sufferings of the Saint ; or even of mortifying his persecutors, who were always left to enjoy the full triumph of their cruelty, and the poor Martyr to expire by a miserable death. When these facts, I say, are brought to the original test, and compared with the genuin and indisputable works of the Creator ; how minute, how trifling, how contemptible must they appear ? and how incredible must it be thought, that, for the instruction of his Church, God should

should employ ministers so precarious, unsatisfactory, and inadequate; *as the extasies of women and boys, and the visions of interested Priests*; which were derided at the very time by men of sense, to whom they were proposed.

That this universal law was actually reveled to the Heathen world, long before the Gospel was known to it, we learn from all the principal sages of antiquity, who made it the capital subject of their studies and writings. *Cicero* has given us a short abstract of it, in a fragment still remaining from one of his books on Government, which I shall here transcribe in his own words, as they will illustrate my sense also, in the exceptionable passages abovementioned, which appears so dark and so dangerous to my Antagonists.

“ The true law, says he, is right reason,
 “ conformable to the nature of things; constant, eternal, diffused through all; which
 “ calls us to duty, by commanding, deterrs us
 “ from sin, by forbidding; which never loses
 “ it’s influence with the good; nor ever pre-
 “ serves it with the wicked. This law cannot
 “ possibly be over-ruled by any other; nor ab-
 “ rogated in the whole or in part: nor can we
 “ be absolved from it, either by the Senate, or
 “ the people: nor are we to seek any other
 “ comment, or interpreter of it, but itself: nor
 “ can there be one law at *Rome*, another at
 “ *Athens*; one now, another hereafter; but the
 “ same eternal, immutable law comprehends all
 “ nations,

“ nations, at all times, under one common
 “ Master and Governor of all, God. He is
 “ the inventor, propoundor, enactor of this
 “ law : and whosoever will not obey it, must
 “ first renounce himself and throw off the na-
 “ ture of man : by doing which, he will suffer
 “ the greatest punishment, tho’ he should es-
 “ cape all the other torments, which are com-
 “ monly believed to be prepared for the wicked.”

Our Doctors, perhaps, will look with horror
 on all this, as rank Deism ; but let them call it
 what they please, I shall ever avow and defend
 it, as the fundamental, essential and vital part of
 all true religion, and what the Gospel itself must
 adopt, as it’s best foundation and support. The
 fragment was preserved to us by *Lactantius*, who
 lived in the third Century, and was the best
 Christian writer of his age ; who, after the re-
 cital of it in his works, makes this reflection
 upon it ; “ what man, tho’ already acquainted
 “ with the mysteries of God, could set forth the
 “ law of God with such force as this ? who yet
 “ was far removed from the knowledge of the
 “ truth. For my part, I look upon those,
 “ who utter such truths without knowing them,
 “ as persons inspired by a divine Spirit. But
 “ as he clearly saw the force and the ground of
 “ the holy law, so, if he had known or could
 “ have explained it’s precepts also, he would
 “ then have performed the part, not of a Philo-
 “ sopher, but of a Prophet [1].” Here we see

[1] D. Jus. vi. viii.

“ a Christ-

a Christian writer, who lived in the third Century, frankly acknowledging this law, as it is explained by *Cicero*, to be the law of God; and which our knowledge, even of the mysteries of God, as propounded to us by the Gospel, could not enable us to illustrate with such force, as the improved reason of this great and virtuous man: which corresponds also with what *Cicero* has elsewhere declared of the same law, *that it was the mind of God, governing all things by eternal reason; whose substitute or interpreter on earth was the reason and mind of the wise* [1].

This is all the explication which I can give, towards healing the scruples of those, who are offended with the passages above mentioned, how far it may satisfy our Doctors, I neither know nor care: for tho' it will ever be my desire to give all satisfaction to every candid and liberal inquirer, yet in the present controversy, these Answerers have shewn, that they came with no view of inquiring freely and philosophically, what was true, but to defend with all their skill, what their prepossessions and ambitious views made them resolve to support at any rate, in defiance of all the light and conviction which could possibly be offered on the contrary side. This will clearly appear to all men of sense and candor from the general turn and spirit of their performances, and from their futile, evasive and illiberal manner of treating the most important arguments of the *Free Inquiry*; which

[1] Leg. ii. 4.

I shall now therefore procede to examine; without troubling the reader with any more of their prefatory objections, which are all chiefly of the same kind; not relating to the main question, but cavilling only on some incidental points, of little or no moment to it, in order to draw something out of them, that, by tainting the credit of the Author with the weaker part of their readers, may infuse a general distrust of his argument.

Let us enter then into the *Free Inquiry*; where the first argument, which I made use of towards confirming my general position, is the silence of the Apostolic Fathers, with regard to any standing power of working miracles, as residing still in that age, for the conversion of the Heathen world. This silence is frankly allowed by the first of my Antagonists, Mr. *Jackson*, who insists however, and endeavours to shew, that the inference, which I draw from it, is vain and groundless. These Doctors however, more stout than their Leader, and resolving to dispute every inch of ground with me, utterly deny the fact of their silence, and affirm; that tho' they do not indeed inlarge on their miraculous powers, nor make any direct appeal to them, as their successors do; yet that many occasional hints and plain references to them are to be found in their writings.

The principal instance, which they produce in proof of this assertion, is from the Epistle of St. *Clemens to the Corinthians*; which, as it is

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paraphrased by *Archbishop Wake*, does expressly assert the subsistence of miraculous powers to that particular age. And upon the authority of this paraphrase, of which I had not taken any notice, they presently reproach me with the willfull suppression of a testimony, which directly overthrows my argument, and to which I had not attempted to give any answer [1]. And here indeed I must confess, that the passage, as explained by the Archbishop, is full to their purpose, and contrary to my own; yet, knowing it to be such, that I willfully omitted it. But I can plead at the same time, with great truth, that the reasons, which moved me to omit it, were, first, the utter insignificancy, which it appeared to have, as to any proof or evidence, relating to this question; and secondly, a regard also for the character of that venerable Prelate, which made me unwilling to recall into public light a paraphrase, which I took to be unworthy of him, and of all others, that I had ever observed, to be the most palpably forced and dressed up, without any ground or color from the text, to serve the point, which he was inculcating, concerning the continuance of the miraculous powers to the times of these Apostolic Fathers.

The Words of the Text, as they stand in the Epistle clear of the paraphrase, and translated by the Archbishop himself, are these, "Let a man be faithfull; let him be powerfull in the

[1] D. 27, 28. Ch. 94, 5.

"utter-

“ utterance of knowledge ; let him be wise in
 “ making an exact judgement of words ; let
 “ him be pure in all his actions : but still, by
 “ how much the more he seems to be above
 “ others, by reason of these things, by so much
 “ the more will it behove him to be humble-
 “ minded, and to seek what is profitable to all
 “ men, not his own advantage [1].”

Thus stands the passage in the Archbishop's English Edition of the Epistles of these Apostolic Fathers ; where no man, whose mind was not prepossessed with the same hypothesis, or senses dazzled with the authority [2] of the Archbishop, could find a syllable, which bears any sort of reference to miraculous powers, or suggests the least hint of the continuance of them to that age [3]. How is it then, that the Archbishop has contrived to give such a turn to it ? Why, not by any critical art, or grammatical rule, but by forcibly thrusting his own sense into it ; in a manner so gross and arbitrary, as would fix the same sense, or any other, upon any passage whatsoever. We see, that the words of the text, unparaphrased, are clear of any miraculous sense ; for in his Preliminary Discourse to these very Epistles he has shewn us, how easily this may be performed on any proper occasion, by the help of a commodious paraphrase.

[1] Wake's Ep. S. 48. [2] Ch. 104. [3] T. 19.

The passage then, when opened and illustrated by the Archbishop's explanatory translation, stands thus;

"Let a man have faith; that is, *says the Archbishop*, such a faith, by which he is able to work miracles: let him be powerfull to utter knowledge; that is, mystical knowledge, *says the Archbishop*, for so that the expression manifestly relates: let him be wise in discerning of speeches; for that was another gift, *says the Archbishop*, common to those times: let him be pure in his actions: but still, by how much the more he seems to exceed others, that is, *says the Archbishop*, upon the account of these extraordinary endowments; by so much the more will it behove him to be humble-minded [1]."

The recital of this paraphrase will readily convince every man of sense, that I could have no other reason for omitting it, than what I have already alledged; nor could I ever imagine, that, in a controversy of this kind, which can be determined onely by the authentic facts and testimonies of antiquity, any one, who professed to be searching into the real ground of it, would attempt to prove by a paraphrase, what he could not prove from the text, and instead of the positive testimony of an Apostolic Father, which his cause necessarily required, take up with the arbitrary comment of a modern Prelate. Such are the shifts, to which these

[1] Wake's Prel. Dif. p. 113.

pretended champions of truth are driven in their defence of the primitive miracles! on which I shall make no farther remark, but refer my reader to Mr. *Toll*, who has very effectually and particularly exposed the impertinence of all the little arts and sophistry, with which they labour to extort miraculous senses out of the dark hints and equivocal passages of these Apostolic Fathers.

Dr. *Dodwell* proceeds, in the next place, to defend the particular proofs, which his Father had formerly alledged from these same Fathers, to evince the continuance of the miraculous powers to their days. These proofs, he says, *are recited by me with contempt*: yet I am conscious, that in reciting them I never had any such intention; and cannot see how my words can fairly be interpreted to imply any. Nor has it ever been my custom, to shew a contempt of any man, who had not justly deserved it of me by some unprovoked and contemptible attack upon myself. In the present case, however, I cannot but applaud the piety of a son, in expressing so jealous a concern for the reputation, and such a zeal to defend the opinions, of a learned and virtuous Parent.

The first of these proofs is taken from the title or address of *Ignatius's* Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*; upon which I have already said what I thought sufficient for my purpose in the *Free Inquiry*: and the objections, which Dr. *Dodwell* has since made to it, are shewn to be

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wholly

wholly insignificant by Mr. Toll [1]. But as his defence of his Father's interpretation wholly turns upon the sense of the word, *charisma*; which he affirms to be a term *peculiarly appropriated to denote extraordinary gifts*; and as he makes much use of the same observation, towards confirming some other objections, in different parts of his work; so I shall add a word or two on this occasion, to shew this favorite criticism to be vain and groundless, and the imaginary conceit of some minute Critic, who happened to want it, as this Doctor here does, for the support of a particular hypothesis. For the word *charisma*, as well in it's native and proper sense, as in the use, which has ever been made of it both by the sacred, and the Primitive writers, signifies nothing more than a gift, whether it be natural or supernatural; ordinary or extraordinary: wherefore, in order to obviate the application of so silly an observation in our present controversy, I had shewn how one of these Apostolic writers, St. Clemens, had applied the word, *charismata*, or gifts of God, to denote the different talents and abilities, natural and acquired, by which the characters of men are usually distinguished; as *strength, riches, wisdom, humility, continence* [2]. But Dr. Dodwell declares, that *he sees no such thing*; and that the very gifts, or *charismata*, here recited, *may strictly be interpreted of supernatural endowments* [3]. What can we say to such

[1] Toll's Def. p. 23.

[2] Free Inq. p. 7.

[3] Dod. p. 30.

perverseness as this? or of what use can it be to reason with so incorrigible a bigotry, which can reject the clear testimony of our senses, rather than give up a groundless hypothesis?

But my notion of the word, *charisma*, may be confirmed also, as I have said, by many testimonies from the sacred writers, as denoting simply *a gift of God*, of what kind soever it may be: of which it will be sufficient to give an instance or two. The gift of God, or *charisma*, says St. Paul, is eternal life [1]: and in other places, where he is speaking of the gifts of God, we find him using the words, *charisma* or *dorema*, indifferently, as terms synonymous, and denoting the same thing [2]. And we sometimes see the same word applied to the gift of worldly riches, or an ability to minister to the necessities of the poor.

On the whole then, as the sole defence, which the Doctor makes of the proof of those numerous miracles, which his Father had drawn out of this passage, is grounded on a mistaken sense of the word *charisma* [3]; so the Father's proof, and the son's defence, must of course fall to the ground. And after all the pains, which they been taking, to puzzle and confound the obvious sense of the text, it will appear at last to be nothing more than this; that the *Church of Smyrna*, being blessed with faith and charity, which *Ignatius* extolls in this very Epistle, as the most excellent of all gifts, and what the

[1] Rom. vi. 23. [2] Ibid. 15, 16. [3] Ch. p. 98.

Apostles themselves prefer to the whole list of them, was deficient in nothing, which could be required to the accomplishment and perfection of the Christian Character.

The Doctor leads us on to another of his Father's proofs, on which he observes, that as I am apt to call for facts, so his Father has here presented me one beforehand [1]. But the fact, here referred to, is not of such a sort, as I shall ever be disposed to call for: nor do I find myself to be presented, in this instance, with any thing more, than what had been offered to me in the last; an unnatural and extravagant interpretation of an obscure passage, whence his Father had inferred the existence of a chimerical fact, of which there is not the least example or intimation in all history. But since the Doctor strenuously defends the truth of his Father's interpretation; asserts the words to be incapable of any other sense, and professes a particular contempt of mine; it will be necessary to recur to the passage itself, that by reviewing and comparing the two opposite expositions, we may settle at last it's real and unquestionable meaning.

St. Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Romans, written on his journey towards that City, where he was going to be exposed to the wild beasts in the Amphitheater, earnestly begs of them, *that they would not shew an unseasonable good will to him, by hindering his martyrdom, but would suffer him to be feed for the beasts* [2]. The quæ-

[1] Dod p. 31.

[2] Wake's Ep. of Ign. § iv.

tion

tion now is; what were the means, which he referred to on this occasion, and which the brethren might apply to the hindrance of his martyrdom? Mr. *Dodwell* the Father, affirms them to be prayers: which had a power, he says, of disabling the beasts from assaulting the Martyr, when exposed to them in the Amphitheaters. But if that had been the meaning of *Ignatius's* request, it would imply, that the efficacy of such prayers had been tried in other cases of martyrdom, prior to that of *Ignatius*: yet no such fact is to be found in all history, nor any mention made of it by the Apostles or Apostolic writers, except by a single intimation in this very Epistle, where *Ignatius* says, that he would encourage the wild beasts, that they might be sure to devour him, and not serve him, as they had done some, whom out of fear they had not touched [1].

But the whole tenor of the Epistle seems utterly to confute this *Dodwellian* hypothesis; in which the Martyr acquaints the Romans, that he had written to the other Churches, and signified to them all, that he was willing to die for God, unless they, the Romans, should hinder him [2]. Now if this hindrance was to be effected by their prayers, surely the prayers of every other Church must have been as effectual, and as much to be apprehended by *Ignatius*, as those of the Romans: yet, tho' in this journey from Asia, he wrote to the Ephesians; to the Magnesians; to the Trallians; to the Philadelphians;

[1] Wake's Ep. of Ign. § v.

[2] Ibid. § ix.

and]

and to the *Smyrneans*, as well as to the *Romans* ; yet it was from the *Romans* alone, that he feared any obstruction to his martyrdom, and whom he entreats to forbear it : to the rest he signifies no fear of hindrance from them, nor any request, that they would not attempt to give him any : which clearly shews, that the hindrance, which he so much dreaded, was not to arise from prayers, but some other means, which were peculiarly practicable to the Christians of *Rome*, and of no other Church whatsoever.

I have already explained my sense of the passage in question, in the *Free Inquiry*, and shewn, that the request of the Martyr related to the intercession and interest, which the Christian brethren of *Rome* proposed to make among their friends and fellow-citizens to preserve him from his cruel fate. And this I have confirmed by the express testimony of the original narrative of this martyrdom, written by persons, who were present at it, and who for that purpose had accompanied the Martyr from *Asia*. I have added the authority also of Dr. *Cave*, a writer in the highest esteem with these admirers of the primitive Fathers, who in the *Life*, which he has written of this Saint, gives the same interpretation to the case now before us. Yet all this is of no weight with Dr. *Dodwell*, who condemns the notion of any interest or intercession, that could be made for the life of the Martyr, as extravagant and impossible, and what will not bear

bear an examination [1], and goes on to observe with great gravity, that *Ignatius* was sentenced by the Emperor himself, who was now absent from *Rome*, and had left no authority there which could mitigate the punishment : that no interest whatsoever could avail against an Imperial decree, nor all the power of the Court of *Rome* prevent the Saint from being thrown to the wild beasts, when *Trajan* had commanded it : so that the only possible method of saving him, which remained, was a miraculous interposition in his favor to be obtained by the efficacy of prayer. This is the sum of his reasoning, by which he confirms his Father's interpretation : and this the examination, which my account of the matter will not bear : yet it is all trifling and declamatory, grounded on loose conjecture, and an imperfect knowledge of the history of those times, as I shall presently shew, by opening a little more explicitly the real nature and circumstances of the case.

These persecutions of the Church, as the writers observe, were frequently brought on and forced as it were upon the Government, by the rage and clamors of the populace, whose hatred to the Christians was ever exerting itself by seizing and dragging them to the tribunals of the Magistrates, and calling loudly for vengeance and punishment upon them : and when this spirit was once raised it was not easily appeased till it had drawn on a general persecution. This

[1] Dod. p. 33.

we may suppose to have been the case under *Trajan* and his successors the *Antonines*, the most virtuous and just of all the *Roman* Emperors, yet all of them successively persecutors of the Church. It was the same sort of indulgence to the humour of the populace, which obliged all the Emperors on some of the greater Festivals to entertain them with public shews and sports in the Circus and Amphitheater, the chief of which were the combats of Gladiators and of wild beasts, and the production of notorious criminals to be thrown to those beasts. This at present was the unhappy lot of the Christians, whom the mob were often demanding to be produced on these occasions for their sport: and for this *Ignatius*, as the leader of the Christians in *Asia*, was now sent to *Rome*, to be exposed to the beasts in the Amphitheater, for the delight of the Roman people, as the Emperor *Trajan*, who condemned him, is said to have expressed it [1]. For one of those Festivals was now approaching, for the celebration of which the diversions above mentioned were always provided, and supplied from all the provinces of the Empire.

When *Ignatius* approached towards *Rome*, guarded all the way by soldiers, the Christians, who came out to meet him, offered to employ all their interests and endeavours to prevent his execution, by moving the people, when assembled in the Amphitheater, to join with them in a common cry and demand to have his life spared.

[1] vi.

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This was agreeable to the custom of *Rome* in these very shews; where in the combats of the Gladiators, though the conquered party was doomed of course to die, yet if he had behaved so, as to excite the compassion of the people, and raise a general clamor in favor of his life, it was always granted to the demand of the assembly: and as the chief end of all these shews was to keep the multitude in good humour, so the case was the same with regard to persons condemned to be thrown to the beasts: where if the mob had taken a fancy to reserve the life of any one in the same manner, they would certainly have been gratified in it.

This was the experiment, which the Christian brethren proposed to try in favor of *Ignatius*; nor was the proposal improbable: their number was now considerable in *Rome*, and many of their friends and acquaintance might have been prevailed with to assist in so compassionate an attempt: so that when an infirm old man came to be produced in the Amphitheater, incapable of giving them any diversion, by any sort of resistance to the beasts, the Christians hoped, that the united voice of their whole party, strengthened by the help of particular friends, as well as of many others, whom compassion would naturally join to them on such an occasion, would be of force enough to procure the life of the saint, from the presiding Magistrate: who from the nature of his office was intrusted always of course

course with a discretionary power of gratifying the people in any demand of that sort.

I shall now leave our Doctor to the quiet possession of his *Father's proofs*, as he calls them, which he may hang up in his parloir with the escutcheons of his arms, as a record of perpetual honor to his family, by inabling them to boast of an ancestor, who, by his singular skill and sagacity, had recovered to the Christian Church, after a succession of seven centuries, an illustrious miracle, wholly unknown and unobserved by all the primitive Fathers. Nor can I omit on this occasion to take notice of the management of Dr. Church, with respect to these *Dodwellian proofs*, for since they came from his partner's Father, he thought it improper for him to meddle with them, and contented himself with the satisfaction of seeing them *defended at large*, as he says, *by the learned, judicious, and ingenious son* [1]. In which he gives us a little specimen of the arts and craft of these Answerers: for though by dropping the defence of those proofs he betrays a consciousness of their weakness, yet he excuses that step with such complements to the Defender of them, as may persuade a common reader, that he takes them to be really strong and completely defended, which yet he dares not venture to affirm.

There is another article, or two, relating to the miraculous gifts of this age, which it will be proper to clear up, before I take leave of these

[1] Ch. p. 97.

Apostolic Fathers. I have observed in the *Free Inquiry*, for the prevention of all unnecessary cavils, that, if from any passages which may be found in these Fathers, it should appear probable to any ; that they were favored, on some occasions, with extraordinary illuminations, visions, or divine impressions, I shall not dispute that point with them, but remind them onely, that the gifts of that sort were merely personal; and did not in any manner relate to the quæstion before us [1]. But in this, my adversaries insist that I have overthrown my whole argument. “ Are not these, says Dr. *Church*, the instances “ of miraculous powers ? and, if there were any “ such after the days of the Apostles, does not “ the new scheme fall to the ground [2] ? ” Yes; I own them to be of a miraculous kind, if, as Dr. *Dodwell* says, *they be real* [3]. Who, by that expression, seems to entertain some doubt about them himself: but whether they be real or not, it is certain, that they are nothing to the purpose of our present controversy; as not being the effect of any standing power granted to the Church, for the Conversion of the Heathens. All that I have allowed or supposed in this case is, that there may be a passage or two in these Apostolic writers, of a dubious signification, which weak and pious minds, persuaded of the frequency of divine impulses and illuminations; indulged to private Christians in all ages of the

[1] *Free Inq.* p. x. [2] *Ch.* p. 107. [3] *Dod.*
p. 42.

Church,

Church, may imagine to denote something of that extraordinary kind. Yet, if they should be strictly interpreted to that sense, the very matter of them would render the notion contemptible to all men of judgement. In one of these passages, St. *Ignatius* intimates, that he had been instructed by the Holy Spirit, concerning *the divisions of the Church of Philadelphia* [1]. And in another, St. *Polycarp*, by means of a vision, is said to have foretold his own death, and the manner of it, three days before it happened [2].

[1] He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man. But the Spirit spake, saying on this wise; *Do nothing without your Bishop.* Epist. to the Philad. § vii.

relates, had a vision, while he lay in the public prison under sentence of death: in which a beautifull woman appeared to him, and, calling him by his name, recited this verse of *Homer*.

[2] *Socrates* also, as *Plato*

"Ἡμᾶς αὖτε περιλάττει Φθίσις ἐπὶ τῷ τρίτῳ ἡμέρας. Il. ix. γ 363.

Upon this, he declared presently to his friend *Crito*, that he was certainly to die on the third day: which fell out accordingly. His vision, therefore, was as prophetic as *Polycarp's*, and equally confirmed by the event: yet they both probably flowed from the common source of all such dreams or visions; the strong impression, which the sense of their uneasy and uncertain condition, perpetually occurring to their waking thoughts, would na-

turally leave upon the fancy even in sleep. Some Critics of great name seem to have been puzzled to discover, how *Socrates* could collect from this verse, that he was to die on the third day; and have imagined it to be intimated to him by the word *Phthia*, as being derived from the verb *phthiō* or *phōiō*, which carries in it the sense of perishing and dissolution. But it was the natural and literal sense of the verse, as it was spoken by *Achilles*,

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To which I can apply nothing better than what Mr. Toll has already said in answer to Dr. Dodwell on this very point; where after a brief review of the nature, the subject, and the evidence of these predictions, he adds; *to cut off therefore at once all reasonings and inferences about them, let it be understood, that we dispute the facts* [1].

But on this article of visions, I am charged

that gave him the hint; in which *Achilles*, on account of the affront which he had received in the *Grecian* camp, declares himself resolved to quit it and return to *Phibia*, his native home, where a voyage of three days would land him in ease and peace. This *Socrates* took to himself as an admonition, that he likewise should be at his home, in the same time; for his philosophy never considered this earth as his home, but promised him another world, where the souls of the just after death were to enjoy a perpetual state of peace and felicity.

Again; it is said of *Poly-carp*, that he was a prophetic teacher, and that every word that went out of his mouth, either had been fulfilled or would be fulfilled. [See *Martyr*. § xvi.] The same is said of *Cicero*, by

Corn. Nepos, who personally knew him, and long survived him. Such was *Cicero's* prudence, says he, that one would imagine it to be a kind of divination: for he foretold not only those things, which happened, while he himself lived, but gave warning, as a Prophet, of the things, which we now see in common practice.

[Vit. Attic. 6.] Now *Cicero's* predictions are ascribed onely to his prudence, *Poly-carp's* to inspiration. But where's the difference? *Poly-carp* foretold his own death, or some calamity perhaps, which was likely to happen to the Church. *Cicero* foretold the important events and revolutions, which happened after his death to the greatest Empire in the world: for the defence of whose liberty he sacrificed his life.

[1] Toll's Def. p. 38.

by my adversaries with a gross inconsistency; for after I have declared the pretended visions of these Apostolic writers to have no relation to my argument, yet, in the progress of my work, I have taken much pains in combating the credit of such visions, as having a close connection with it. *How are these things reconcileable?* says Dr. Church. *Visions and revelations are one of the five kinds of miracles, which he examines. If such visions, &c. do not at all relate to the present question, then all that part of the Inquiry, where these are considered, no less than sixteen pages, are nothing to his purpose* [1]. Yet these things are all consistent, and reconcileable at once to every one, who does not, either wilfully or inadvertently, overlook the true state of the fact.

It is allowed on all sides, that the Apostolic Fathers make no mention of any standing miraculous powers, as indulged to the Church in their days: and that the visions, which are ascribed to them, are collected onely from an incidental hint or two, of an obscure and precarious meaning: and as such visions also were onely of a private and a personal kind, without any use or effect towards the conversion of the Heathen world; so it is evident, that they could not in any sort belong to the question in dispute. But in the following ages, when an appeal was expressly, constantly, and openly made by all the Fathers, to a perpetual power of working miracles, as actually subsisting among them; and to

[1] Ch. p. 108.

which

which the Heathens themselves were invited to come, and be eye-witnesses: and when in the catalogue of these miracles, *visions* and *prophecy* are particularly enumerated, as common in the Church; and granted to women, and boys, and all sorts of Christians whatsoever; then visions became the proper subject of my work, and required an examination of them, as well as any other gifts, which are claimed by the same Fathers. This is the genuine state of the case, which clearly shews, that the inconsistency with which it is charged, flows wholly from the blunders and inattention of those, who charge it.

But there is another argument still for the miraculous powers of this age, which our doctors have kept in reserve, as their forlorn hope, in order to rally, and renew the fight, with it, if their first attack should prove unsuccessful. They were aware, that all the positive evidence of miracles, which could be drawn from the Apostolic Fathers, would be found too weak at last, to make any impression in favor of their opinion: so that after all the pains, which they have been taking to push that sort of proof as far as it would go, they now change hands; take up the contrary side of the question, and attempt to confute me by that very silence of these Fathers, with which I had been pressing them. *Cicero* in one of his youthful orations, speaking of certain witnesses, whom he had been examining, says; *tacendo clamant*; he condemns the expression afterwards, as too puerile; but

the application of it made here by our Doctors is certainly much more so. No proof of an affirmative kind, can reasonably be drawn from mere silence; whatever force it has with regard to facts of history, is chiefly negative, oftner detracting from their credit, than adding any strength to them in the present case; therefore when we reflect, that immediately before the times of these Apostolic Fathers, miracles are allowed to have subsisted in great abundance; yet that the said miracles have long since been withdrawn, at some time or other which remains still unknown, and unsettled, we cannot be at a loss to determine, whether the silence of half a century, which immediately succeeded to that age of miracles, should incline us rather to believe, that they were continued still to the Church, through that silent period, or that they were actually withdrawn at that very time and no other.

Dr. *Dodwell*, on the other hand, reasons thus;
 “ If their silence were as total and uniform, as
 “ Doctor *M.* contends, it might be urged
 “ strongly on our side of the question. For it
 “ is scarce credible, that they should no where
 “ take any notice of so great and sudden an al-
 “ teration, as must have happened, if the princi-
 “ pal leaders of the Christian cause, and Go-
 “ vernors of the Church had all at once been
 “ deprived, in those times of adversity, of the
 “ privileges and succours, which common con-
 “ verts enjoyed in the generation immediately
 “ pre-

“preceding [1].” Now it is granted by all Protestant Doctors, and in particular by these two: that the Governors of the Church were in some age or other actually deprived of those miraculous succours, which their predecessors had enjoyed; yet the time, when this alteration happened, is a secret, which, as Dr. *Church* says, it is very difficult and perhaps impossible to us, to discover [2]. And, if I should ask the reason, he would tell me presently, because the Fathers, as if ashamed to tell us how they had forfeited those favors, were wholly silent on that article. And thus Dr. *Dodwell*’s argument is utterly confuted by fact and experience as well as their own concessions.

But the most remarkable circumstance in the present question is, that though all Protestants are agreed in allowing and believing, that after the third or fourth century at least, all true miracles actually ceased, yet in all the succeeding ages, there is not a single leader or Governor of the Church, who either owns any such cessation, or does not in the most grave and solemn manner attest the continuance of them in great abundance to his own age. Wherefore, as the silence of the Apostolic Fathers is singular, and not to be found in any other age whatsoever, from the days of the Apostles, down to the time of the Reformation; so that their circumstances and characters, we may imagine, were singular also, and unlike to those of every other age: by

[1] Dod. p. 41.

[2] Ch. p. 4.

being destitute of those extraordinary powers, which their predecessors the Apostles had enjoyed; yet unwilling to supply them by forgeries as their successors are supposed, and the greatest part of them allowed to have done.

Thus we see, how these Doctors, after all their efforts, to strain and wrest to their purpose, two or three obscure passages of these Apostolic Fathers, have not been able to draw out the least proof, of the subsistence of any miraculous powers among them; especially of those, which are the proper subject of this inquiry. For this is a distinction, which I find myself obliged to repeat, since all these Answerers, who appear to have known nothing of the state of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, have not yet learnt from it, as in the first place they ought to have done, a right state of the question. The position, which I affirm, is, that, after the days of the Apostles, no standing power of working miracles was continued to the Church, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of unbelievers. This is what the title of my work implies; what my whole reasoning turns upon; and what I have often signified in the course of it, to be my precise meaning. Yet all my antagonists treat my argument, as if it absolutely rejected every thing of a miraculous kind, whether wrought within the Church by the agency of men, or on any other occasion, by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles whenever he pleases, no body, I dare

dare say, will deny : but whether he has wrought any or not, since the days of the Apostles, is an inquiry, which I do not at all enter into : the single point, which I maintain, is, that the Church had no standing power of working any.

This distinction was seen at once by those writers, who have appeared in the defence of my book, and who have justly rebuked these Answerers for their neglect of it ; as being necessary to a right management of the dispute, and obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this admonition, they still declare it to be a mere evasion and subterfuge, never intended by me at first, but an after-thought, contrived to elude the force of some objections, which were found to press me [2].

The distinction however, though just and clear, was not marked out by me, for the sake of any advantage, which I might derive from it to my cause, for I know none, which it could give, but merely to shorten the dispute, and to prevent unnecessary wranglings, on facts and instances, which do not belong to it. For though I have no better opinion perhaps of the Miracles, said to have been wrought without the Church, than of those, which are affirmed to have been performed within it ; yet as I confine my argument intirely to the latter sort ; I would not be drawn away, to an examination of facts, foreign to my purpose, and but little regarded at present in the Christian world, from my more

[1] T. p. 29. Let. 16.

[2] Ch. Pref. p. 8, 9.

important task, of dissolving a chain of pretended Miracles which at this very day enslaves and ties down the whole Christian Church, to certain doctrines and practices, which tend to debase the simplicity of the Gospel, and to give a superstitious turn to the piety and devotion of its professors. If my adversaries therefore had paid a due regard to the distinction just mentioned, it would have saved them some trouble in many instances, and especially in the story of *Polycarp's* Martyrdom, and the Miracles which accompanied it: on the defence of which they now exert all their zeal, declaring them to be decisive, and to have utterly overthrown my whole Scheme [1]. Whereas in truth, whatever be the real character of them, they are nothing at all to the purpose, as being neither wrought by any standing power in the Church, nor carrying any sort of evidence, that any such power was then subsisting in it.

But if these Miracles have no relation, as I say, to the present dispute, it is asked, for what reason then did I introduce them into it? To which I answer, that it was for no other, than to expose the trifling and frivolous nature of them; and to shew, how fondly the Christians of this early age were disposed to give a miraculous turn to every unusual incident, which might happen to take place on any important and affecting occasion. My manner of introducing them declares my contempt of them; and I thought,

[1] In. p. 9. D. p. 36.

that

that a bare recital of them would render them as contemptible to others as they appeared to myself [1]. But I have missed my aim with these Answerers, who have the confidence still to affirm, that I do not dispute the reality of them, but leave them in possession of Miracles, as great and wonderful as any in the Christian Church; that I stand convicted by my own concessions; and by acknowledging the genuineness of the Epistle, confirm the genuineness of the facts related in it: than which nothing can be more senseless and absurd. For though I call that piece one of the most authentic in all antiquity, I shew at the same time, that I am not declaring my own opinion, but that which was generally held of it by the Church: and when I mention the advertisement annexed to the end of it, concerning the miraculous discovery of the same piece by a revelation from *Polycarp*, will any imagine, that I could believe so silly a fiction, though I made no reflection upon it? No, I took the very mention of it, as I have said, to be a clear detection of its forged character.

Wherefore all, which I now propose to add on the subject of this wonderful Martyrdom, shall be restrained to the article of *the Dove*, said to fly out of the wound, that was made in the body of the Saint; this all my Antagonists give up at once as incredible, and consider it either as the blunder of the transcriber, by putting one word for another; or as an interpolation craftily

[1] Free Inq. p. 124.

inserted

inserted into the text, after the time of *Eusebius*, who, in the abstract, which he has given of this same narrative, takes no notice of this flight of the Dove. They are all aware, that if this article should be thought genuin it would overthrow the credit of all the other Miracles in the same narrative ; which for that reason they take great pains to clear from this fable, as they call it, which yet in defiance of all their efforts, will, upon a fair and critical examination, appear to be as authentic a part of the original piece, as any other miraculous fact related in it.

The first edition of the intire Epistle was published by Archbishop *Usher*, with the passage of the Dove in it, from a Latin version, the oldest copy, as he tells us, of the whole piece, that was any where extant ; supposed to have been written soon after the time of *Eusebius*, and to be the same, which is mentioned to have been publicly read in the Churches of *France*, till the sixth century : which Copy Archbishop *Wake* also declares to be so well attested, that we need no further assurance of the facts which it contains[1]. All the Greek copies are of a later date, than the Latin version, yet all of them retain this article of the Dove : and from a collation of these the learned *Cotelerius* and *Ruinart* published their several editions of this same Epistle ; both of them though Papists, very candid and judicious inquirers into the genuin monuments of Christian antiquity : and in the last

[1] *Wake's Prel. Disc.* p. 59.

edition also, set forth by that eminent and protestant Critic *M. Le Clerc*, who was never suspected either of superstition or credulity, the Dove still keeps its place, without any reflection or censure upon it by the Editor.

Archbishop *Wake* indeed has omitted it in his English Translation, for which he makes the following apology ; “ I confess, I am so little a
“ friend to such kinds of Miracles, that I thought
“ it better, with *Eusebius*, to omit that circum-
“ stance, than to mention it from Bishop *Usher*’s
“ Manuscript. And indeed besides the strange-
“ ness of such an adventure, I cannot think, had
“ any such thing truly happened at his death,
“ that not onely *Eusebius* should be ignorant of
“ it, but that neither *St. Hierom*, nor *Ruffinus*,
“ nor the *Menea* of the Greek Church should not
“ have made the least mention of it. Where-
“ fore there must have been either some inter-
“ polation, or because that does not appear, it
“ may perhaps be better accounted for by the
“ mistake of a single letter [1].” This mistake *M. Le Moine* has endeavoured to correct by an ingenious emendation ; which some of my Antagonists lay hold of, and others reject and prefer the notion of an interpolation as the best solution of the matter [2].

There is one reflection, however, added here by the Archbishop, which might have induced him, one would think, to have given us this story as intire, as he had found it in all the edi-

[1] Wake’s Prel. Disc. p. 57.

[2] Ch. p. 277,

tions ; for, if it has any weight in it, it refutes at once all the vain conjectures of these minute Critics, and proves the circumstance of *the Dove* to have been an original part of the manuscript. For he observes, upon the authority of M. *Le Moyne*, that *Lucian*, in his raillery on the death of *Peregrinus*, who voluntarily committed himself to the flames, in the sight of all *Greece* at the *Olympic* games ; and out of whose funeral pile he makes a Vultur to ascend, is supposed under the character of that frantic Philosopher, and his Vultur, to ridicule the Martyrdom and Pigeon of *Polycarp* [1]. The reflection is allowed by the Archbishop to have *something of a foundation* : and men of sense, I dare say, will think it to have a good one, when they consider, that the death of *Peregrinus* happened about the same time with that of *Polycarp* ; and that *Lucian* was contemporary with them ; an Apostate from Christianity, and ever after its bitter enemy ; and taking all occasions, to deride the doctrines, the rites, the credulity and superstition of its professors. There is a second observation, intimated also by the same Archbishop, which seems to give a further confirmation to the genuineness of *Polycarp's Dove* : for he refers us, in a marginal note, to *Prudentius*, who celebrating, in one of his hymns, the Martyrdom of a noble Virgin, called *Eulalia*, makes a *Dove* to fly out of her mouth, at the very moment, in which she expired. Now a fiction of so strange a kind would

[1] Wake's Prel. Disc. p. 57.

hardly have been hazarded, one would think, by so pious a writer, if there had not been a precedent for it, in the more famous Martyrdom of *Polycarp*.

There is nothing now left, to discredit the story of *the Dove*, but the silence of *Eusebius* with regard to it; whose account of this Martyrdom is allowed to be the oldest of any other whatsoever. But it must be observed, that *Eusebius* does not give us here the intire narrative, but an abstract of it onely, or an abridgment, proper to be inserted into his general history; in which the writer, according to his own discretion and judgement, always omits whatever he thinks insignificant, or unnecessary, or of suspicious credit, or improper to be offered to public view. In the abstract then, which was not written by him till about two hundred years after the fact, he has thrown out many passages which he found in all the earlier copies, and which are still found in all the modern editions, and among the rest, even one of the miraculous kind, in which the body of the Saint is said, *to have stood in the midst of the flames, not as flesh, which is burnt, but as bread, which is baked* [1]. Now the sentence here omitted, is found in all the editions, in common with the article of the Dove; yet is not imputed to any mistake, or interpolation of a later date, but to the design and choice of the compiler, who might think the comparison of *Polycarp's body in the flames*

[1] P. 15.

with

with bread baked in an oven, too coarse and unnatural to deserve a place in his History.

But whatever reason *Eusebius* might have for the omission of this passage, he had certainly a much greater for the omission of *the Dove*. The copies of this narrative appear to have been very rare, so that the scandal which this particular story might have given, had not yet reached far, but lain dormant as it were and obscure among a few onely : but if *Eusebius* had transcribed it into his History, it would soon have been spread into all hands, and even of the chief persons of the Empire, which was now become Christian. We cannot doubt therefore, but that he wilfully dropt it out of his abstract, as these champions are now endeavouring to throw it out of all the copies : yet not on the account of its being a mistake or interpolation of any transcriber, but because every body would see it to be a most flagrant and shameful fiction. In short ; as the story is of a kind, which was much more likely to be dropped, when found in any copy, than after it had been dropped to be recalled into it again ; so it is not credible, that, after so great a man as *Eusebius* had published the narrative itself without it, any one would have the hardiness to insert or interpolate it, if it had not been found in all the other copies, which lay dispersed in different hands, and believed to be a genuine part of the original piece. As to the silence of the later writers about it, it is of no weight at all : they followed onely the transcript of *Eusebius*,

bius, and were glad to get rid of so ridiculous a fiction, when they had so good an authority to plead for the omission of it.

I shall now dismiss the miracles of *Polycarp's martyrdom*, on which, tho' they have no relation to the question in dispute, and are in themselves utterly contemptible, my Answerers lay the greatest stress, as if they were subversive of my whole argument. They have my leave however, to enjoy them, and insult me with them as much as they please; but will find in the end, that the more pains they take to hold them up, the more they will hurt their own cause and strengthen mine. Since men of sense will never be brought to believe that any true Miracles could be subsisting in that age, which has no better specimen of them to give us, than this; nothing but a perplexed and patched up story of a few trifling facts, of a precarious interpretation, which may reasonably be imputed to the fiction of an Enthusiastic piety, ever flattering and deluding itself with a vain persuasion of the present influence and interposition of the Deity.

And that this will certainly be the fate of these Miracles is confirmed to us already in some measure by the authority of a very learned and judicious writer, who, without any respect to the present controversy, treating on the proper credibility of Miracles in general, and taking occasion, in the course of his argument, to consider the narrative of *Polycarp's Martyrdom*, finds it necessary to declare, from the impertinence
and

and inconstitence of the miraculous facts related in it, *that there is great reason to be jealous of the veracity of the compiler, and just ground to suspect the credit of a story in which we see, that there has been tampering* [1].

[1] See Two Previous questions impartially considered, p: 26, 30.

N. B. The Martyrdom of Bishop Hooper, in the Reign of Queen Mary, is compared by the Compiler of it, *J. Fox*, to that of *Polycarp*, from a similitude of several circumstances, which are ascribed to them both. I thought it proper therefore to present the reader with a short abstract of it, and a reflection or two to illustrate the comparison.

When this Bishop was fastened to the stake, and the officers were going to bind his neck and legs with hoops of iron, he utterly refused them, as *Polycarp* is said to have done, and would have none; saying; I am well assured, that I shall not trouble you, and doubt not but that God will give me strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire. The fire did not presently kindle, being made of green faggots, which were mingled with reeds to quicken them: at

length however it burned about him, but the wind having full strength in that place, blew the flame from him, so that he was no more but touched by the fire. Within a space after, a few faggots were brought, and a new fire kindled with them, which burned at the nether parts, being driven about by the wind, save that it did burn his hair, and scorch his skin a little. — When the second fire was spent, he wiped both his eyes with his hands, and, beholding the people, said with an indifferent low voice, for God's love, good people, let me have more fire. All this while his nether parts were burning, but the faggots were so few, that the flame did not strongly burn his upper parts till a third and more vigorous fire being kindled some time after put an end to his life. Thus he stood three quarters of an hour or more in the fire, even as a lamb, and patiently abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards nor

As

As to the testimonies of the succeeding Fathers, which come next to be considered, it is

backwards, nor to either side, till his nether parts being burnt, and his bowels fallen out, he died as quietly as a child in his bed. *See Fox Chronic. vol. iii. p. 156.*

Now there is as much reason to imagine a miraculous interposition in the Martyrdom of this Bishop, as in that of *Polycarp*. The flame blown all about him by the wind, scorched his skin, yet burnt his hair; which shews, that in some turnings of it, it must have made the resemblance as it were of an arch, as it is said to have done around *Polycarp*, or it could not have had that effect of burning the hair of his head, while it onely scorched his body, which may be said therefore, as truly as *Polycarp's*, to have stood in the midst of it, not as flesh that is burnt, but as bread that is baked. But when the second fire, was found ineffectual to burn him, if the executioner had then dispatched him with a sword, there would have been a better pretence for a Miracle, than in the case of *Polycarp*: for he suffered the trial onely of one fire without

being burnt, but this Martyr of two. There is another circumstance observed by the Historian, which made *Polycarp's* Martyrdom less grievous than this of *Hooper*, for when the fire did not burn, they ministered a quick dispatch to *Polycarp* by a sword, moved probably by some compassion, but the tormentors of *Hooper* suffered him without compassion, to stand three quarters of an hour in the fire. As to a voice from Heaven to encourage the Martyr, whatever use it might be of in *Polycarp's* case, there was no occasion for it here: *Hooper* had an assurance within his own breast, which he accordingly declared, that God would give him strength to endure the extremity of the fire: and the event shewed that such strength was actually given to him, and that his declaration therefore was prophetic: and the patience and fortitude with which he bore his sufferings, may justly be thought as miraculous, as of any the most celebrated Martyrs of the primitive ages.

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agreed

agreed on all sides, that they strongly and explicitly affirm the continuance of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, as constantly exerted in the Church through each succeeding age. On this head then my Answerers allow, that I have fairly drawn out all the principal testimonies, which relate to our quæstion, and enumerated all the extraordinary gifts and powers which these Fathers declare to have subsisted among them. Nay instead of charging me with the suppression of any, their sole exception is, that I have added one to the list, which does not belong to it, and which none of the Fathers have any where claimed, *viz. the gift of expounding the Scriptures*. As this therefore is the onely point which these Doctors here dispute with me, and which, as we shall presently find, is a point of no small importance to my main argument, so it will be necessary to employ a little pains in examining and clearing up the truth of it: where by opening the ground and reason of ascribing this gift to the Church, I shall shew the reason also for which my Adversaries so stiffly reject it.

Irenæus, speaking of the miraculous powers which were frequent in his time, says; we hear many in the Church indued with prophetic gifts; speaking with all kinds of tongues; laying open the secrets of men for the public good; and *expounding the mysteries of God* [1]. Now as by the mysteries of God, which are said here to

[1] 2. vi.

be expounded in the Church, nothing else can reasonably be understood, but the mysteries proposed to us in the scriptures, so in a recital of this gift in another part of my work, I call it *the gift of expounding the Scriptures*; as I think myself warranted to do, by the manifest sense of the words, which seem incapable indeed of any other. Dr. *Dodwell*, on the other hand, declares; that in all the passages that I had cited, he does not find any such claim of an extraordinary power of expounding the Holy Scriptures. *Irenæus* indeed speaks of expounding the mysteries of God, but says not one word of the Holy Scriptures [1]. Dr. *Church* affirms the same thing, and says; that *in looking over the accounts, he finds nothing like any claim to a miraculous gift of expounding the Scriptures* [2]. But what a pityfull way of quibbling is this? the word, *scriptures*, is not expressly mentioned in the testimony, therefore, the gift of expounding them cannot be implied in it. But if *the mysteries of God*, do not mean the same thing, I should be glad to know what other meaning they can possibly have: for tho' our Doctors reject this, they give us no other in it's place, but leave the words to shift for themselves, and the reader to take them in what sense he pleases, provided, that he does not take them, for *the mysteries of the Gospel*, which it is their business to deny.

[1] Dod. p. 57.

[2] Ch. p. 127.

But besides this passage of *Irenæus*, from which alone the thing itself may fairly be inferred, we learn from the express and direct testimony of *Gregory*, called the wonder-worker, that the gift of expounding the Holy Scriptures was actually claimed and reckoned as one of the most esteemed and excellent gifts of those primitive times : and was poured out, in the largest measure, upon his Master *Origen*.

His words are ; “ *Origen* has received this
“ greatest gift from God, with an abundant
“ share of it from heaven ; to be the Interpreter
“ of the words of God to men ; to understand
“ the things of God, as if God himself were
“ speaking, and to expound them to men, that
“ men also might hear them [1].”

This then is the gift, to which we are referred by *Irenæus*, whose words cannot possibly be understood of any other, unless we suppose those early ages to have been entrusted with some secret mysteries, peculiar to themselves, and unknown to their Successors, and which God had not thought fit to revele to us in the sacred Scriptures.

St. *Paul* calls himself and his fellow-laborers, *Apollos* and *Cephas*, the stewards or dispensors of the mysteries of God [2]. And in another place,

[1] Δῶρον τὸ μέγιστον ἔτος
διοθεῖν ἔχει λαβὼν, καὶ μοῖραν
παιδείας ὑπερανόθεν, ἱερμανύς εἶναι
τῶν τῷ Θεῷ λόγων πρὸς ἀνθρώ-
πους, συνίεναι τὰ Θεοῦ, ὡς Θεῷ

λαλεῖν, καὶ διηγῆσθαι ἀνθρώ-
ποις, ὡς ἀκούσων αὐθροῦ.
Vid. Greg. Thaum. Orat.
Panegy. in Orig. p. 73. D.

[2] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

alluding to the doctrines of the Gospel, *great*, says he, *is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh; justified in the spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory* [1]. Again, speaking of the Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, he calls them, *the revelation* of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began [2]. I could mention several other places, where *the mysteries of God*, or of *his will*, or *of the Gospel*, are applied by Christ himself, to denote the doctrines taught by the Gospel. And surely a divine faculty of expounding the mysteries of God, which run through both the Testaments, and constitute the noblest and most sublime parts of each, must have been one of the most useful and important of those miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have been indulged to those primitive ages. Since *the mysteries of God* then, as they are mentioned by *Irenæus*, must be understood to refer to the same mysteries, which are affirmed by Christ and his Apostles, to be revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, the gift of expounding them cannot possibly signify any thing else, than the gift of expounding the most abstruse and difficult passages of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament.

This point being thus settled, it opens my way to the defence of another, which I had affirmed in consequence of it; that *Justin Martyr*

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 16.

[2] Rom. xvi. 15.

lays claim to this gift of expounding the Scriptures, as indulged to him in an extraordinary manner, by the special grace of God. In proof of this, I have alledged three several passages from *Justin* himself, which I took to be strong and express to my point, and which had led several learned men before me into the same opinion. But with these more learned Doctors, my three testimonies from *Justin* are nothing at all to the purpose, nor imply the least claim to any extraordinary gift; they insist, that I wholly mistake the matter, and through my ignorance of the proper sense of the words, imagine them to signify something divine and supernatural, when they signify nothing more than the *ordinary grace of God*, and *the ordinary assistance of the Spirit*, common, as they say, to all believers, and what every good Christian was intituled to as well as *Justin* [1].

And here indeed I must confess the ignorance, with which I am charged by them of the proper sense of these expressions, *the ordinary grace*, and *the ordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost*. They are used, I know, frequently among Christians, but chiefly by that sort, who know not what they mean, or rather mean nothing at all by them. But when Doctors of Divinity apply them, in the way of proof or argument, they ought surely to define the precise meaning of them, or otherwise, we cannot judge of the propriety, of what they pretend to deduce and infer from them. I

[1] D. p. 62. Ch. 131.

looked,

looked, therefore, into Dr. Dodwell's book, to discover, as well as I was able, in what sense I might suppose him to have applied these phrases; but instead of any satisfaction, I found nothing there but perplexity and confusion. He says, "that the word *χάρις* or grace is never used to describe a supernatural gift, but known to mean that ordinary co-operation of the Holy Spirit with our best endeavours, which is common to all believers; yet in the next words he treats it as having no meaning at all, but as a common way of speaking, which pious persons accustom themselves to, of ascribing every good thing, which they possess, to the grace of God: and so *Justin*, he says, when he speaks of his knowledge of the Scriptures, as wholly obtained by grace, produces such interpretations of them as appear to have been drawn from his reason: yet, in contradiction to all this, he declares at the same time, that the assistance of the Spirit, being a power added to our nature, may therefore in some sense be called *supernatural* [1]."

Dr. Church is just as confused, as his partner, in his account also of this *ordinary grace*: he reasons upon it through a page or two, without giving us any hint of what he means by it, and without knowing it, I dare say, himself. The sole explication which he attempts of it is, *that in general it is necessary to open men's understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures, and*

[1] Dod. p. 62, 3.

embrace the truths of the Gospel contained therein, but implies nothing infallible, or miraculous, or any thing more than what any one might attain by his own power [1], *and enjoy if he would.* Now the onely idea, which I can form of the meaning which these Doctors would have us give to their phrase, *of ordinary grace*, is, that we should take it for a principle, neither absolutely natural, nor supernatural, but of a mixed kind between both, and partaking alike of each; for under that character, it would be of excellent use in Theological controversies, where the disputants might make something or nothing of it, just as their argument may require; might advance it to supernatural, when it wanted any help of that sort, or when it demanded the contrary, might depress it to the state of a mere human faculty. Being thus prepared and enlightened by the instruction of these Doctors for a right interpretation of the passages alledged from *Justin*, I now procede to a particular review and examination of them.

On the first of these passages, Dr. *Dodwell* observes, that I have not cited the whole, but referred to it onely, for which reason he thought it necessary to translate the whole at large, which he has accordingly performed in the following words; “ I will endeavours says *Justin*, in his
“ conference with a Jew, to explain to you the
“ Scriptures, without laboring to shew merely
“ any artificial ornament of language; for I

[1] Ch. p. 131.

“ have

“ have no talent of that sort, but grace onely is
 “ given to me of God, to understand the Scrip-
 “ tures, of which grace I will pray, that all may
 “ be freely and fully partakers, that I may not
 “ for this, be liable to judgement, in that dis-
 “ pensation of it which God the Creator of
 “ all things will exercise by my Lord Jesus
 “ Christ [1].”

Now in this passage *Justin* declares, that in the interpretations of Scripture, which he was going to lay before the Jew, he had no power or faculty of adorning them by any artful or elegant composition of words, *but that grace alone was given to him by God, to understand his Scriptures.* And here I shall once more affirm; that this is the express claim of an extraordinary gift, and that the context also, from which our Doctors labor to draw a contrary sense, clearly confirms mine. They insist, on the other hand, that *Justin* had not the least thought of claiming any extraordinary endowment in this place, or any thing more, than such a knowledge of the Scriptures, as every good Christian might acquire by his own strength as well as *Justin*: for he was not obliged *to pray*, says Dr. *Dodwell*, that all might be inspired, if he had spoken of his own proficiency in the Scriptures in that sense, but he thought himself bound *to pray*, that all might be favored with the knowledge of those sacred writings [2]. But the most surprizing circumstance in this case is, how the notion of *Justin's*

[1] Dod. p. 60.

[2] Ibid.

praying,

praying, as the translation here makes him to do, could enter into the Doctor's head : or how it was possible, for any man, who has the least tincture of Greek, to translate the word παρακαλῶ, by *I will pray*. A verb, which implies no sort of reference or allusion whatsoever to prayer, or to any act or office, which can be addressed to God, but to man only, in the sense of exhorting, admonishing, and entreating, &c. But besides this blunder, which is of the grossest kind, he makes a second also, and that no slight one, in the same verb, by giving it the sense of a future time, when it absolutely indicates the present. Dr. *Church*, indeed, has rightly translated the verb, by *I exhort and beseech all*, to become partakers, &c. but the turn which he gives to the whole, and the inference which he draws from it, is the same with his Partner's, weak and false. They both reason upon it in the same manner ; the one, that *Justin* could not have prayed ; the other, that he could not have exhorted the Jews, with whom he was discoursing to partake of a gift, which they could not acquire by any endeavours of their own : for to exhort a man to acquire what is not in his power, is a flagrant insult upon him [1]. But *Justin's* exhortation carries no absurdity of that sort in it, but confirms the sense, which I have given of his claiming here, a divine and extraordinary gift : to which he immediately adds, of which grace, thus given to me, I exhort you

[1] Ch. p. 131.

all, without reward or envy, to become partakers, that I may not be found liable to punishment in the day of judgement. Where the exhortation has no sort of reference to the acquisition of any gift, either ordinary or extraordinary, nor any other meaning than to move them to take the benefit of that gift, which was given peculiarly to *Justin*, by attending to those interpretations, which he was offering to them, and embracing that true sense of the Scriptures, which he was now qualified to teach them. For on what other account could he be apprehensive of any punishment from God at the last day, but for the neglect of imparting and communicating to others the benefit of that extraordinary gift, which had been indulged to himself of unfolding and explaining the mysteries of God? of which duty he was now discharging his conscience, and throwing the guilt upon those only, who refused to pay a proper regard to it.

There are two other testimonies, which I have produced likewise to the same purposes and from this same dialogue, in one of which *Justin* says to the Jew; *Do you think, that I could ever have been able to understand these things from the Scriptures, if by the will of their author, I had not received the grace to understand them* [1]? In the other place, speaking of Christ, as the sole reveler of the Father to all those, who know him, he says, *he has revealed to us therefore all those things, which, by his grace, we have understood from the Scrip-*

[1] Di. p. 390.

tures.

tures [1]. But to these testimonies our Doctors answer, that *Justin* is not speaking here of himself, but of the whole body of *the Christians*. The words *ῥημᾶς* and *ἐλάλομεν* are plural, says Dr. *Church*, and seem plainly to relate to the Christians in general [2]: And Dr. *Dodwell* has taken care to distinguish the plural sense in his translations of them. Yet they might have observed, that one of the same testimonies begins with a plural verb, which yet cannot admit any other interpretation, than of the singular number, as being addressed only to the single person of *Trypho*. And this indeed is a common custom with all writers, to use the plural terms *we* and *us*, when they expect to be understood as speaking onely of themselves. Dr. *Dodwell* himself will supply us with many instances of it. Speaking of my opinion, he says, it appears to us to be a dangerous error. And in several places we find him saying; if *we* were disposed to make reprisals; if *we* interpret strictly; this might strongly be urged *on our side*, &c. [3]. If I had a mind therefore to trifle here, as these Doctors do, I might contend that Doctor *Dodwell* could not be the author of this book, but the secretary onely of some little Synod, who jointly compiled it; for the plural expressions which he so frequently uses, *it appears to us*, &c. are the true synodical style, and cannot be applied to a single person; were I disposed there-

[1] Di. p. 352.
P. 4, 30, 41.

[2] Ch. p. 132.

[3] Dod.

fore,

Forè, I say, to cavil and divert the reader from the proper subject, I should not be more impertinent than these Doctors have actually been; for as it is nothing to my purpose, whether Dr. *Dodwell's* book was written by himself, or with the assistance of friends, the matter of it being what alone I am concerned with; so it is not more to the purpose of these Doctors, whether *Justin* speaks here onely of himself, or of a number of Christians: for if he affirms either of himself or of all, that they were inspired by God with the right interpretation of his Scriptures, that is the whole, which I contend for: and that he actually does affirm it, will appear, I think, unquestionably to every man, unprejudiced, who considers the joint force of the three testimonies, which I have produced in the proof of it: and yet *Justin* is not talking of any common or ordinary points of the Scriptures, but of the most abstruse and recondite passages of the Old Testament, in which, as in a veil, the chief evidences of the Messiah were supposed to have been wrapped up. The same testimonies, as I have already hinted, have ever been understood in the same sense, which I have given to them, by all men of learning, who have any esteem for the Antient Fathers; and especially by those, who were the most eminently acquainted with the principles and monuments of primitive antiquity. Thus the learned *Hallonix*, in his *Life of Justin*, affirms; that in his Dialogue with *Trypho* he several times declares,

“ that

“ that the gift of understanding the Scriptures,
 “ was conferred upon him in a divine or extra-
 “ ordinary manner ; and that so great and bene-
 “ ficial a talent, intrusted to his hands, made
 “ him extremely sollicitous, lest it should prove
 “ unfruitful, and be kept up by him as an use-
 “ less and hidden treasure [1].” *Mr. Tillemont*
 also, who, of all men, has published the most ex-
 act and voluminous collection, of the writings,
 the doctrines, the characters, and the lives of
 those primitive Fathers, observes, “ that of all
 “ the extraordinary graces, which the Holy
 “ Spirit bestowed upon the Church in those
 “ times, there were few so considerable, as that
 “ of understanding the Scriptures, which was
 “ communicated by singular favor to *Justin* [2].”

This then will appear at last to be the genuin
 case of the gift of expounding the Scriptures or
 the mysteries of God. It is expressly attested by
Irenæus ; was ever reckoned among the extra-
 ordinary gifts of those times ; was claimed espe-
 cially by *Justin* ; and is affirmed to have been
 largely poured out upon *Origen*. Yet the most
 learned and inquisitive of our Protestant Di-
 vines, and even those, who pay the greatest re-
 verence to the characters of the Fathers, are
 forced to confess, that they cannot discover the
 least instance or trace of any such gift in the
 writings of those Fathers ; but on the contrary,
 that their interpretations of the Scriptures are
 generally so unnatural, and extravagant, that

[1] 4. p. 23. not.

[2] P. 2, 358, 380.

instead

instead of being the dictates of a divine inspiration, they seem to be the effects rather of an unsound mind and disordered reason. Wherefore the falsehood and imposture so manifestly discovered, and even confessed in the claim of this particular gift, must needs leave a strong suspicion, upon the authority of all the rest. Yet these shall be heard likewise for themselves, nor be implicitly condemned, till they have had a fair trial. For which purpose I shall procede to review two or three of the principal of them, and examine, what pretensions they can justly make to that credit and belief which they still generally obtain among Christians.

The next miracle, which I propose to examine is, that of *raising the dead*. Which *Irenæus* expressly affirms, *to have been frequently performed in those days on necessary occasions, by great fasting and the joint supplications of the Church of the place: and that the persons he raised had lived afterwards among them many years* [1]. Now on this article, as *Dr. Dodwell* rightly observes, *there is great stress to be laid* [2]. I shall lay as much upon it therefore, as he pleases; shall consent, that the issue of the whole may rest upon it, and that the proofs and evidence of this capital Miracle, may determine the fate of all the rest.

By way of objection to this testimony of *Irenæus*, I had observed, “ that if a Miracle of so surprising a nature had been so frequent, as he

[1] P. 186. 88.

[2] Dod. p. 78.

“ declares

“ declares it to have been ; performed, as it
 “ were in every parish, or place, where there
 “ was a Christian Church, it must have made a
 “ great noise in the world, and been celebrated
 “ not onely by the Primitive Fathers, but by
 “ all Historians or Writers of those times [1].”

But here they cavil a while at the frequency, which I ascribe to this Miracle : *To suppose this Miracle, says Dr. Church, to have been common in every place, where there was a Society of Christians, or a Church, is a mistake grounded on a false construction of Irenæus's words* [2]. Which, tho' confidently affirmed and repeated by him, is utterly false. *Irenæus* attests it, as we have seen, to have been *frequently performed on necessary occasions, by the fasting and joint supplication of the Church of the place* : which words, as they limit it to no particular place, so they necessarily imply it to have been common alike to all places, wherever there was a proper occasion, and a Society of Christians to pray for it ; which is the very sense, that I had given to them. And from the same words, Mr. Dodwell, the Father, has inferred, that the instances of this Miracle were more numerous in this age, than in that even of the Apostles : *They raised the dead, says he, in the Apostolic Churches, yet we have few examples of it, in the genuin acts of the Apostles ; but in Irenæus's days, they raised not a few, but very often* [3].

As to the other part of my objection, that so wonderful a fact, if it had been frequent, must

[1] Free Inq. p. 72.

[2] Ch. p. 189.

[3] P. 42.

have

have made great noise in the world, and been celebrated by all writers, they treat it with much contempt. "Who should be expected to record these instances? says Dr. *Dodwell*, the "Heathen Historians would not, if they had "known and believed them, for it would have "been an act of self condemnation in them; "neither would Christian Historians, if such "there had been; for this would have been "drawing down unnecessarily persecution upon "those particular persons; when a general as- "sertion of the facts would serve their argument "as well [1]." "By what Historians, says Dr. " *Church*, would this gentleman have had these "Miracles celebrated? By Jewish or Heathen "ones? this was not to be expected. Could "they have disproved such accounts, no doubt "but they would have been glad to do it, and "we may depend upon it, that this had been "done; but to celebrate them, was what they "were little inclined to, if indeed they gave "themselves any trouble to examine them[2]."

Another of my Answerers argues also in the same strain: "'Tis not probable, says he, a "Heathen Historian would have related such a "fact, had he known it. 'Tis equally impro- "bable, he should know it: seeing the Christians "knew, with whom they had to do; and that, "had such an instance been made publick, they "would not long have enjoyed him, who had "been given back to their prayers [3]." The

[1] Dod. p. 78. [2] Ch. p. 186. [3] P. 114.
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reader surely must think it strange, that men who know any thing of human nature, or the history of past ages, can reason at so wild a rate, or imagine, that an Heathen, though he had seen the fact performed before his eyes, could resolve to stifle the impression, and persist to deny the reality of it. Had the Heathens no curiosity, no love of truth, no desire of knowledge, in points of the highest importance? Yes; they possessed those principles in a very great degree. The Superstition and Idolatry of the popular religions, had long been contemned by all the wise and virtuous among them, who were perpetually searching after a more perfect and excellent rule. These searches gave birth to various sects of Philosophy; some of which maintained the existence, the unity, and providence of God; the immortality of the soul, &c. Others also taught the same doctrines, but as probable onely, not certain: while some still doubted, and even flatly denied them all. On these points therefore, continual disputes and arguments were carried on, in all the politer parts of the Heathen world; and especially in *Greece* and *Rome*; so that, in such circumstances, the sight of a person raised from the dead, offered in such a manner, as carried with it a demonstration of its reality, must have been, of all spectacles, the most desirable to a sober and inquisitive Heathen; as it would have settled all their disputes, and corrected their philosophy at once; and convinced them all, not onely of the

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certainty

certainty of a resurrection; but of that very sort, which all philosophy had ever held to be impossible, *the resurrection of the body*.

Mr. Millar, in his *History of the propagation of Christianity*, a work particularly recommended to his readers by Dr. Church, observes, "that by the good providence of God, philosophy began to flourish among the Heathens, a little before the coming of Christ, which was of great use to refine the minds of men, and render them capable of receiving the celestial and sublime truths of the Gospel [1]." But these narrow minded Answerers, whose thoughts never reach farther, than the contrivance of an expedient, how to clear themselves of a present difficulty, insist; that an Heathen, though he had been an eye-witness of so striking a fact, and intirely convinced of its truth, yet, in spite of all conviction, would have been insensible of the force of it, and incited onely, to persecute and destroy the particular actors in it. Nay, their whole representation of the matter tends to persuade us, that if the Heathens had been invited to see the Miracle performed in their presence, they would have knocked the man down, as soon as he began to rise, and smothered him again in his grave, before he was got out of it.

Such nonsense as this, which they would put upon us here for argument, can hardly fail of persuading every intelligent reader, that a claim of Miracles, which wants such a defence, must

[1] Millar's Hist. p. 1.

necessarily be fictitious: yet they procede with great complacency, to confirm it by several curious observations. “ We may observe in the “ next place, says Dr. *Church*, that this Miracle “ differs from others in one thing; that there is “ no occasion for its being openly performed. “ Because Infidels, who never had an opportunity of seeing it, yet, if they have sufficient “ evidence of it, ought in reason and conscience “ to believe it. And sufficient evidence of its “ reality may easily be had, even though no one “ witness was present at the working of it [1].”

This observation indeed is new, and purely his own; never heard, I dare say, before, or thought of by any man, but is so contrary to all the notions, which History and experience have taught us on this article, that I cannot help wondering, whence it could come into this Doctor’s head, or what facts and instances he can have to ground it upon. If the end of all Miracles be to create faith and conviction: and if when performed before our eyes, they impart a stronger conviction, than an hundred witnesses can give, who had not seen them, it cannot be the peculiar difference of the greatest of all Miracles, that it need be reported onely, not seen; and that, in distinction from all other Miracles, it should require our belief, upon the testimony even of those, who themselves had not seen it: for surely, the more uncommon and surprizing

[1] Ch. p. 187.

the

the nature of any miracle may be, the more it will always want to be openly performed.

In the history of the Gospel we find the Miracles of this kind, which were wrought by our Lord, to have been performed by him, in broad day-light and the midst of crouds. Thus in the City of *Nain*, the widow's son was raised from the bier, as they were carrying him to his grave, *in the sight of much people : so that the rumor of it went forth through all Judæa, and all the region round about* [1]. The daughter also of the Ruler was raised by him in such a manner, *that the fame of it is said to have gone abroad into all the land* [2]. And in raising *Lazarus*, *Jesus lift up his eyes, and said ; Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I knew, that thou bearest me always ; but because of the people, which stand by, I said it, that they may believe, that thou hast sent me. Upon which many of the Jews, who had seen the things, which he did, believed on him* [3].

What was it then, that could possibly suggest so crude an observation to our Doctor ? Why nothing, but the character of this very primitive Miracle, which we are considering as it is stated and described by *Irenæus*. With this indeed his observation perfectly tallies : for this, we must own, was of a kind, which had no occasion to be openly performed : the very report of it rendered it suspected, and the production of it would have blasted it. For as they themselves allow,

[1] Luke vii. 17.
41, &c.

[2] Matt. ix. 26.

[3] John xi.

it was not designed for the public, nor the conversion of the Heathens; but to be performed onely in the dark, among a few of the faithful; on certain necessary occasions; which are neither specified, nor discoverable to any man. All which is so palpably contradictory to the character and effects of this particular Miracle, that it can hardly fail of convincing every reader, that the original claim of it was false; and the instances of it, which are said to have subsisted among the Christians, mere fictions, contrived by the crafty and political, to feed the credulity of the pious and the simple.

But in what ever light we consider the account of this Miracle, as it is given by *Irenæus* and defended by these Advocates, it will appear to be nothing else but a ridiculous and contemptible tale. For since the conversion of the Heathens, the most important of all ends, and to which all other Miracles were chiefly applied, was not intended by it, what *necessary occasion* could there be for it, among the private and dispersed Societies of the Christians, or what cause of weight enough, to engage a whole Church in a course of fasting and prayer for the performance of it? The Christians of this age, instead of being fond of life, were longing to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; were thirsting after an immortality of glory, and offering themselves forwardly to Martyrdom, that they might obtain it a few years the sooner: they wanted no Miracle for the confirmation of their faith;

faith; the firmness of which was the ground of God's favor to them, and of their own fortitude, in suffering those persecutions, to which it exposed them: they were persuaded of the resurrection of the body, and to pray therefore, to see an instance of it, would not have been an act of piety, but of levity. And to suppose, that a whole Congregation should be induced to fast and pray, that a departed friend, or parent, or husband should be restored to life, to relieve the present grief, or gratify the fond affection of particular persons or families, cannot be thought a *necessary occasion*, or an end worthy of the interposition of God.

Then as to the persons, who were so raised; they could not possibly receive any imaginable benefit from a favor so extraordinary: for after they had been delivered from all the troubles of this life, it must have been an occasion of misery and mortification to them, to have been thrown back again into the midst of them: and when they were arrived at their journey's end, and within the reach of that bliss, which had been the object of all their hopes, and the end of all their wishes, to be thrust back from it again at the very moment of fruition, must have been a disappointment, of all others, the most grievous to a pious soul. And for this, what amends could they receive in being restored to so wretched a life, as they must have led from the time of their resurrection; sculking perpetually, and hiding themselves among a few friends? since if they

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happened

happened to be discovered, they were sure, as these Answerers tell us, of being destroyed by the Heathens.

But after all these evasive expedients and senseless conceits of these Doctors, it is not possible, from the nature of the thing, that this Miracle could have been concealed; or that the persons, who were raised, and lived many years after it, could live undiscovered by the Heathens. In every place, where there was a society of Christians, whether in a City, Town, or Village, the Heathens were by far the majority, and surrounded them on all sides; so that a Christian could not die, or be carried at least to his grave, without being observed by some or other of his Heathen neighbours; much less could he be called again into life, without astonishing all those, who had ever seen or known him before, and whose astonishment would presently have been communicated through the whole neighbourhood: and as the same miracle is affirmed to have been worked indifferently in every place, where there was a necessary occasion, and a number of Christians, to fast and pray for it; so the fame of it must needs have reached, as far as the Gospel itself was then spread.

It is allowed, however, in the present case, that the Heathens knew nothing at all of the matter, but constantly held the fact itself to be impossible, which I have urged as a clear proof, that they had never seen or heard of its being performed, except in such a manner, as carried with
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it a suspicion of fraud and collusion. But *this prepossession*, says Dr. Dodwell, *was the very thing, which prevented their attending to it at all; for they could not think, that they needed particular circumstances to disprove that, which they thought impossible in itself* [1]: which, like all the rest of his remarks on this article, has neither sense nor force in it. For let us suppose the claim of this same Miracle to be made by any Christians in our own days; in which there is not a single Protestant of any judgement, who is not as strongly prepossessed, as the Heathens antiently were, with a persuasion, that no mortal now living, nor any number of them, can possibly raise the dead. Yet, if he was well informed, that it had been done by any particular congregation, and upon an invitation to see it done by the same, should there receive a full conviction of its reality, by seeing a person actually raised from the grave before his own eyes; he could not help adoring the power and majesty of God, in a work of so wonderful a nature, and revering at the same time the sanctity of those men and their prayers, by which God was moved to interpose, in so extraordinary a manner. And this the Heathens themselves would certainly have done in the same case; a Miracle of this sort offered to the conviction of their senses, would have stifled all their prejudices at once, how strong soever they had been: for human nature was ever the same in all ages; and it was as im-

[1] Dod. p. 79.

possible,

possible, for men of judgement, to withstand the clear evidence of their senses in antient times, as it is, for men of the same character, to reject it in the present.

But I had offered one objection to the reality of this miraculous gift, which, of itself, I take to be decisive, and a sure proof, that the claim of it must have been false. The objection is this; “that in the very same age, in which *Irenæus* declares this Miracle to be often performed, and that persons so raised had lived afterwards among them many years; yet when *Autolytus*, an eminent Heathen, challenged his friend *Theophilus*, Bishop of Antioch, to shew him but one, who had been so raised among the Christians, with a promise of turning Christian upon it himself, *Theophilus* discovered by his answer, that he was not able to give him that satisfaction [1].” Dr. *Dodwell* allows this objection to be plausible, and the most to my purpose of any in my whole performance [2]. And in order to refute, or at least to weaken its force, recurs to his usual expedient of affirming, that *I have mistaken the answer of Theophilus, given a wrong turn to it, and misrepresented it in several points*; to confirm which, he gives us a translation of the whole, cooked up to his own sense, in the following words.

“Farther, you deny the resurrection of the dead. For you say, shew me even one raised

[1] Free Inq. p. 73.

[2] Dod. p. 79.

“from

“ from the dead, on the sight of which I will
 “ believe. But in the first place, what great
 “ thing is it, if you do believe, what you see
 “ yourself. Farther, if you can believe, that
 “ *Hercules*, that burned himself, does still live;
 “ and that *Esculapius*, that was killed by light-
 “ ning, was raised again; can you disbelieve
 “ the things, which are reported to you by
 “ God himself? In like manner, if I should
 “ shew you one raised from the dead and still
 “ living, even this you would disbelieve [1],
 &c.

From this passage, as it is here translated, the doctor attempts to shew, that *Autolycus's* demand was, not to see a person, *who had been raised from the dead among the Christians*, but to see one actually raised upon the spot, and in his presence, by *Theophilus* himself; and that the onely point, which he was here speaking of was *the general resurrection of the dead; which he at present denied, but owned he would believe, if he could see an instance of it* [2]. An interpretation wholly foreign to the purpose, and utterly inconsistent with the genuin sense of the words. For the first part of them, which chiefly relate to the point in question, should be rendered thus: *But farther; you deny, that the dead are now raised; for you say, shew me but one, who has been raised from the dead, and by seeing him I will become a believer.*

[1] Dod. p. 83.

[2] Ibid. p. 84.

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This is the indisputable sense of the words, and exactly conformable to the representation, that I had given of them : in which we see a plain reference to a report, which was then current and affirmed by all the Christians of those days, that there were several persons actually living among them, who had been raised from the dead. This was the fact, which *Autolycus* could not believe, and on which therefore he required satisfaction from his friend *Theophilus*, by seeing an instance produced before him of any one who had been so raised : in which *Theophilus*, how desirous soever he might be, to gratify him, was not able to do it. Every school-boy would readily tell us, that *καὶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι* [1], denotes an action of the present time, *ἐν τῷ παρελθόντι* one, that is past. Yet our Doctor to support this paultry shift, of putting *the general resurrection* upon us, as the sole point here referred to, has quite reversed the matter ; and of the two capital words, on which the force of the whole sentence turns, has given a future sense to that, which indicates the present, and a present, to that which indicates the past ; and to say the truth, his whole translation betrays either such a bigotry, as will not allow any sense, in any words, which does not tally with his own prejudices ; or such an ignorance of the Greek, as

[1] Our Lord uses the same form of expression, in his answer to the message sent to him by *John the Baptist*, where among the other proofs of his Messiahship he adds, *καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἑγερσονται*, *the dead are raised up*. Matth. xi. 3.

is incapable of discovering what their sense really is.

But what surprizes me the more in this translation, is, that it flatly contradicts his Father's exposition of it, from which, as being the same with my own, I hoped to have gained some little authority with him in an argument, which he owns to be plausible. In other instances, we have found him stiffly adhering to the interpretations of his Father, and strenuously defending them, though manifestly erroneous; which I could not help imputing to his piety, and zealous regard for the reputation of a learned and worthy parent. But what shall we say to him now, when we find him rejecting his Father's sense, and declaring it to be *wrong*, though it be demonstrably right, and what he ought to have embraced, if it had come from an adversary. His Father perfectly knew, that the participle, *ἡγερθείς*, could not possibly mean any thing else, in its proper and grammatical sense, but a person, who had *already been raised from the dead*: but the son affirms it to signify one, who was about to be raised, or in the act of rising, which shews, that he had nothing of that filial tenderness, with which I had imagined him to have been indued, but the true spirit of a controversial zealot, whom neither the authority of Grammar, nor of a Father, nor of truth itself can move, whenever they thwart the System, which he had undertaken to defend.

But

But that *Autolycus's* demand wholly relates to a person, who *had been actually raised*, is proved beyond all doubt by *Theophilus's* answer to it, as it stands here translated, even by the Doctor himself: for if I should shew you one, says he, *raised from the dead, and still living*, even this you would disbelieve: which directly corresponds with that sense of it, and cannot possibly do so with any other. As to the character of *Autolycus*, we know nothing more of it, than what may be collected from the writings of *Theophilus*, who addressed three books to him, containing an Apology for the Christian religion, drawn with a particular view of satisfying *Autolycus's* scruples, and making him also a convert, as *Theophilus* himself was. From his familiarity and friendship with this eminent Bishop, we may justly infer, that he was of a candid, reasonable, and inquisitive disposition; a contemner of the Idolatry and Superstition of the public religion, and desirous to embrace a more rational worship if he could any where find it. In these circumstances Christianity was proposed to him, to which he seems to have been inclined, but the miraculous pretensions of the Christians appear to have shocked him, and infused certain scruples, which were first to be removed. He could not believe, that they had the power, of which they boasted, of *raising the dead*; or that there were any persons then living among them, who had been so raised: this was the point, in which he required to be satisfied; and
if

if *Theophilus* would shew him an instance of any such person, so as to convince him of the reality of the fact, he promised to turn Christian upon it [1].

The demand was certainly reasonable, and suitable to the character of a discreet, and sober inquirer. And if the claim of this Miracle had been true, as it is affirmed by *Irenæus*; it could not have been difficult to have produced one; nor could there have been an occasion more worthy of it, than the conversion of an illustrious and virtuous Heathen, who sought and offered to become a believer on that very condition. Nor can we imagine, but that *Theophilus*, who was taking so much pains to convert him, and addressed three books to him with that very view, would not have been glad to have gratified him in this request, if it had been in his power, and so procured his conversion at once. For it is very remarkable; that *Theophilus* does not excuse himself from giving the satisfaction, which was desired by alledging, what these modern Advocates take it into their heads to sup-

[1] Dr. *Doddwell*, with his usual obstinacy, flatly denies that *Autolytus* makes any such promise, in the passage above recited; yet the words themselves are express, ἵνα ἰδῶν πιστεύσω, and cannot possibly be interpreted to any other sense: and we find the same verb πιστεύω, continually ap-

plied in the New Testament, in the same manner, to denote a man's becoming a believer, not of this or that particular point, but of the whole faith of Christ. *Mark* xv. 32. ἵνα ἰδῶμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν. *Matt.* xxvii. 42. *John* ix. 38. ὁ δ' ἔφη, πιστεύω, &c.

pose,

pose, that the persons who had been raised some years before were now dead again the second time ; nor does he plead any difficulty in the production of an instance, on account of their being all dispersed and removed to any distant countries ; and much less, would he have said, what our ingenious Doctors have contrived to say on this occasion, that the production of such a person, would have *exposed him onely to persecution, or to have been knocked on the head upon the spot* : but he insists onely, that if he should produce one, *Autolycus* would not still believe it. Which shews, that all their pretended instances of this great Miracle were of a kind, that could not stand the test of a fair examination, nor give any satisfactory proof of their reality, to a candid and impartial inquirer. And this opinion will be the more clearly confirmed to us, by considering the shuffling, futile, and inconsistent account, which these Doctors have given of the conduct of *Theophilus*.

Dr. *Dodwell*, who by a gross mistake contends, that *Autolycus's* demand was, to see the Miracle of raising the dead, performed before his eyes by *Theophilus* himself, tells us, “ that
 “ to ask, why such a power was not granted on
 “ this occasion, for the satisfaction of *Autolycus*,
 “ is entering into the counsels of his Providence, who might have good reasons for not
 “ vouchsafing this method of conviction to him.
 “ That after the other evidence, which had
 “ been offered to him, it might not be indeed
 “ proper

“ proper to offer a Miracle for his conviction.
 “ But that if such a Miracle had been wrought
 “ in his presence, he would have found some
 “ way or other to evade it; would probably
 “ have suggested, that there was a confederacy
 “ between them, or have imputed the recovery
 “ to the force of art, or offered some such eva-
 “ sion, as hardened infidelity can always sug-
 “ gest [1].”

Dr. *Church* observes, “ that Mr. *Dodwell*,
 “ the Father, thought this answer of *Theophilus*
 “ a proof, not only that this Miracle had then
 “ ceased, or at least was no longer common;
 “ but also, that those, who had been raised, had,
 “ in the space of forty years, been dead again.
 “ Which suppositions answer the difficulty, and
 “ are neither of them disproved by me. How-
 “ ever, it must be owned, adds he, that *Autoly-*
 “ *cus’s* demand was unreasonable, especially, if
 “ the case be, as Mr. *Dodwell’s* son has endea-
 “ voured to shew, that *Autolycus’s* demand was
 “ to see one raised from the dead in his sight,
 “ and not one, who had been raised before;
 “ which would have been little or no satisfac-
 “ tion to him. By this way of considering the
 “ passage, the foundation of the objection is re-
 “ moved. On the whole, therefore, tho’ *Theo-*
 “ *philus* did not produce any instance of this
 “ Miracle, to gratify the vain humour, and
 “ idle curiosity of his Antagonist; this cannot

[1] Dod. p. 78, 84.

“set aside the positive and express testimony of
 “*Irenæus* [1].”

Such is their way of refuting a positive fact ; by a number of suppositions, either wholly vain and fanciful, or grounded on their own blunders and ignorance of the subject, which they are treating. The fact however is incontestible. *Autolycus* demanded to see a person, who had been raised from the dead ; could not be gratified in that demand ; for which our Doctors think it a sufficient apology, to say, “that Providence might judge it improper, to give that conviction, to *his vain humour and idle curiosity* ; that there was evidence enough of another sort, which ought to have convinced him ; and if a Miracle had been wrought for the purpose in his presence, he was such an *hard-ned Infidel*, that it would have made no impression upon him.” Whereas the whole, which we can fairly collect, either of the nature of the man, or of his demand, is ; that he was a candid inquirer after truth, and ready to embrace it, wherever it could be found ; and that his demand, instead of being the effect of any idle humor or curiosity, was the result of a serious and deliberate intention, to become a convert to Christianity, if he could be convinced onely of this single point, *that there were any persons then living among the Christians, who had been raised from the dead.* And the sole inference, which we can reasonably draw from the inabi-

[1] Ch. p. 189.

lity

lity of this Bishop to give him that satisfaction, is; that there were no such persons then in being; and consequently, no such miraculous gift then subsisting in the Church, how positively soever it may be attested by *Irenæus*; *Theophilus* lived in the same age with him; and tho' we should suppose him to have been somewhat younger, and to have lived some years longer, yet if the Miracle itself had ceased, after it had been exerted for some short time, according to the testimony of *Irenæus*; or if the persons, who had been raised in the days of *Irenæus*, were all dead again before *Theophilus* wrote, it is certain, that he would have mentioned either the one, or the other, to excuse his want of power to satisfy his friend. But he had no such excuse to make; and the conceits of this sort, to which our modern Advocates now recur, are but the vain expedients of men, laboring to prop up a lame cause, unable to support itself, by the help of fictitious circumstances, of their own invention.

Besides all these various improbabilities, which appear upon the very face of this miraculous gift; I have observed, that it stands upon the single testimony of *Irenæus* [1], and is not mentioned or referred to in any manner, by any of the succeeding Fathers, through the three first centuries: which circumstance alone seems to be sufficient to blast it's credit. For it is scarce possible to conceive, if this gift had

[1] Free Inq. p. 188.

really subsisted in *Irenæus's* days, and in so full a measure, as he affirms it to have done, that all the later writers, and the Apologists especially, could have omitted the mention of it, or suffered the memory of a fact, so reputable to their cause, to have been lost and buried in oblivion, when they make it their business to display, in the strongest terms, every other miraculous power, which they pretend to have been indulged to them from heaven; *of casting out Devils, curing diseases, prophetic trances, &c.* This, I say, might reasonably incline us to suspect, that this attempt of some of the more crafty Christians, to assert and keep up a pretension to this primary Miracle, having been found vain and impracticable, and without any other effect, than of drawing the greater derision and contempt upon them from the Heathens, they prudently chose to drop and bury it for the future in utter silence.

I have further observed, that in the earlier times also, after the days of the Apostles, there is no intimation of the subsistence of this Miracle in the Church, except in a single instance, found in the writings of *Papias*, which *Eusebius*, who slightly touches it, seems to rank *among the other fabulous stories, recorded by that weak man* [1]. But here my Answerers flatly contradict me; "*Eusebius*, says Dr. Church, cites *Papias* as saying, that this Miracle had been done in his time. Neither can I discern the

[1] p. 72.

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"least

“ least doubt or distrust in the Historian, tho’
 “ this Gentleman is pleased to say, *he seems to*
 “ *rank it among the other fabulous stories, deliver-*
 “ *ed by that weak man.* And however weak
 “ *Papias* was, he may be a good witness of such
 “ a fact: no wisdom was here required [1].”
 Another of them says, it is *plain, that Eusebius*
was not diffident about the Miracle of raising the
dead, related by Papias, nor ranks it among fa-
bles [2]. I shall employ a few words therefore
 to clear up the state of this fact.

Eusebius, in the chapter of his History here
 referred to, sets forth the particular character of
Papias and his writings, of whom he says; “that
 “ he was a diligent collector of unwritten tra-
 “ ditions, which he gathered chiefly from those
 “ Elders, who had conversed with the Apostles;
 “ especially from *John, the Presbyter, and Aris-*
 “ *tion*: and besides these, he relates some other
 “ wonderfull things on the authority of tradi-
 “ tion; particularly a story reported to him by
 “ the daughters of *Philip, of a dead person, who*
 “ *had been raised to life*; and another story, of
 “ *Justus, surnamed Barsabas, who happened to*
 “ drink a cup of deadly poyson, yet by the
 “ grace of God received no harm from it. Af-
 “ ter which, he goes on to tell us, how *Papias,*
 “ from the same source of unwritten tradition,
 “ had recorded some strange parables and doc-
 “ trines of our Lord, and several other *fabulous*

[1] Ch. p. 185. [2] p. 46.

“ *tales*: especially that, of a *corporeal and sensual*
 “ *millennium*, in which Christ was to reign with
 “ the Saints upon this earth, for a thousand
 “ years after the general resurrection: which
 “ he ascribes to the mistake and blunder of *Papias*,
 “ *papas*, who grossly and literally interpreted,
 “ what the Apostles had delivered in a typical
 “ or mystical sense. For *Papias*, says he, was
 “ of a *very shallow understanding*, as is evident
 “ *from his writings*; yet the greatest part of the
 “ Ecclesiastical Writers or Fathers, who suc-
 “ ceeded him, were led by his authority into
 “ the same opinion, on account of the age of
 “ the man, as *Irenæus* in particular, as well as
 “ every other writer, who asserts the like doc-
 “ trines [1].”

Now from this account let any unprejudiced man judge, whether *Eusebius* can be thought to have laid any sort of stress on an *bearsay-story*, as it was recorded by *Papias*, concerning a person unknown; who had been raised from the dead: and whether he does not put it upon the same rank, with all the other *strange parables and tales*, which he mentions to have been delivered by the same weak man, and expressly declares to be *fabulous*, *μυθικότητες*; this at least is certain, and sufficient for my purpose; that after the character here given, of the *little understanding*, and *great credulity* of *Papias*, no man of judgment will think his testimony of any weight in the present case; or venture to affirm, as Dr. *Church* has done, that *how weak soever he might*

[1] Euseb. p. 339.

be, he may still be a good witness of such a fact. For all that can be allowed to such a character is, that he may be a very good believer of an *hearsay-story*; but to call him a good witness of it, is absurd, and contradictory to the common sense and experience of mankind.

But before I dismiss this instance of *Papias*, I shall just remind the Doctor once more, of what the learned Mr. *Millar*, his own favorite writer, has said, concerning the credit of his testimony, in a similar case of a questionable fact. "Tho' many of the Antients, says he, have given some ground for this story, yet it flows originally onely from *Papias*, called *Bishop of Hierapolis*, as cited by *Eusebius*, for *Papias's* books are lost. But if they were extant; according to the same *Eusebius*, the Author of them was but a person of a mean character; a rude, simple, and vain man, who believed and reported things upon common tradition, even things that were *μυθώματα*, liker to fables than truths. He was a millenary, and introduced fabulous stories into the Church, which a multitude of writers after him licked up [1]."

Thus we see, how the character of *Papias* stands between these two Authors, Mr. *Millar*, and Dr. *Church*; men of the same principles; of the same reverence for the primitive Fathers; and writers after each other's own heart. Mr. *Millar*, being led by his arguments, to combat the reality of a fact, which was supported chief-

[1] *Millar*, p. 280.

ly by the testimony of *Papias*, frankly sets forth the true character of the man, as it is represented by *Eusebius*, and shews him, to have been utterly void both of judgement and veracity, and unworthy therefore of any credit. Dr. *Church*, on the other hand, being engaged to defend a system, where the testimony of *Papias* is of some little use to him, resolves at all adventures to hold up his character, and howmany lies soever may have been told, and fables invented by him, affirms him to be a *good witness*, even of a fact, which, of all others is, in its own nature, the most surprizing and incredible.

But to return to the Miracle, which we have been examining: it not onely stands, as we have shewn, upon the single testimony of *Irenæus*, but I have shewn also, that this single witness was of a character, on which we cannot reasonably depend for the truth of a report so extraordinary. I have shewn him to be of so credulous, superstitious, and enthusiastical a turn of mind, as would dispose him to embrace and assert any fabulous tale, which tended, as he thought, in any manner, to advance the credit of the Gospel, or to confute an Heretic. That he has actually affirmed several facts, doctrines, and traditions, as delivered down to him directly from the Apostles, which are allowed even by his Advocates, to be absolutely false and groundless: all which I have confirmed by such clear and undeniable instances, as would utterly blast the credit of the most esteemed and eminent

nent writer now living. In short, I have shewn him to be a second *Papias*, whose scholar he was ; and by whom, as *Eusebius* tells us, he was *imposed upon, and drawn to believe, and teach those spurious doctrines and traditions*, with which his writings abound, and which his authority continued to impose likewise upon the Fathers, who succeeded him.

To these exceptions, urged by me against the credibility of his testimony, our Champions have not attempted to give any particular answer : but since his authority must by all means be supported, or their argument would sink at once, they affirm still with one voice, that *his testimony is superior to all exception* ; and they lay it down as an indisputable maxim ; *that the positive evidence of a witness, so pious and so sincerely devoted to the Christian cause, must necessarily demand our belief in all Cases, how extraordinary or incredible soever they may be in their own nature* : This is the general answer which they give to all objections of this kind ; and on this maxim, as extravagant as it is, the merit of their cause and reasoning is intirely grounded.

And now I cannot help flattering myself, that every sensible and unprejudiced reader will be of the same mind with me, with regard to the claim of this primary Miracle, as it is set forth by the testimony of *Irenæus*. For if a strict and impartial examination can qualify me to form a proper judgement of it ; or if I have any ability to distinguish between true and false ; probable

bable and improbable; I may safely pronounce, that there is not a grain of truth in it, nor a single circumstance belonging to it, which a *Free Inquirer*, or a *Free Answerer*, if he was sincere, could justly think probable. As to my Antagonists, the impotence of their attempts to confute my argument is a strong confirmation of the truth of it. While they defend these Miracles to be true, their very defences prove them to be false; and while they assume to themselves the title of *Free Answerers*, their answers shew them to be slaves to systems, and lifted for the perpetual defence of received and established opinions, whether true or false. Lastly, since this is a point, on which, as Dr. Dodwell has observed, *great stress ought to be laid*; I here freely stake the whole merit and credit of my work upon it; and if this Miracle at last should be adjudged to be true, shall quit the field to my adversaries, and own myself unable, to prove any of the rest to be false.

The gift of tongues also, as well as that of raising the dead, stands upon the single testimony of *Irenæus*, without the least notice or mention of it in any succeeding writer through the three first centuries. I have offered several objections to the reality of it, sufficient to expose the falshood of that claim, which is made of it by *Irenæus*, and shall now consider, what my Answerers have offered towards the confutation of those objections. I cannot help observing however, in the first place, how ignorant they

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were

were of the nature of this particular gift, till they had acquired some little insight into it, from the perusal of my work. Before the publication of my *Free Inquiry*, the Answerers of my Introductory Discourse, affirm it to have been absolutely necessary to the propagation of the Gospel, and without which no success could be expected; and urge that necessity as a sure proof of its continuance after the days of the Apostles, and consequently, as a confutation of my general argument. And this indeed has ever been the universal sense of all Divines, without exception, from our Archbishops down to our Vicars, as oft as they had occasion to touch upon this subject in their Sermons or other Discourses, of which I could produce many instances, but shall content myself with one for the present.

The late Bishop *Burnet*, speaking of the Romish missions of these later ages, among the remote and barbarous nations, says; “ It is so sublime a mystery to think on God, and his attributes and works: or to think of another state, and the way, that leads to it; that still God furnishes out a new mission of Apostles, with a measure of those extraordinary gifts, which were poured out on the great Pentecost, it is not easy to imagine how the conversion of the Heathen nations should be made. And since the chief grounds on which we prove the Christian religion, are taken from the prophecies of the Old Testament, and their accomplishment in the New—to
“ the

“ the *Barbarians*, who know nothing of this,
 “ and have no way of informing themselves
 “ concerning it, all this proof can signify no-
 “ thing.—So that in order to the convincing
 “ their understandings—I do not see, how we
 “ should expect, that they should yield easily,
 “ unless there were a new power of working
 “ Miracles, conferred on those, who labor in it :
 “ for what noise soever their Missionaries make
 “ with their Miracles in those remote parts, it is
 “ plain, that these are all impostures : for the
 “ most necessary of all Miracles for the con-
 “ version of strange nations being *the Gift of*
 “ *tongues*, with which the Apostles were fur-
 “ nished at first; and since they are all forced
 “ to acknowledge, that this is wanting to them,
 “ we have all possible reason to conclude, that
 “ God would not change his method, or qualify
 “ men to work wonders, and not give them that,
 “ which is both the most sensible and most use-
 “ ful of all others, towards that end, for which
 “ he authorises them [1].”

This, I say, was the established notion and
 character of this particular *gift of Tongues*,
 among all our Divines, till the publication of *the*
Free Inquiry. But since this has taught them,
 that, how necessary soever this Gift might be,
 it was either not continued to the Church after
 the Days of the Apostles, or withdrawn at least
 within a generation or two after, we now find
 our Doctors in a quite different tone, from all

[1] Bishop Burnet's Pref. to Lactant. p. 12, 13, 14, 15.
 who

who wrote before them ; and as if the nature of this Miracle had been wholly changed at once, treating it, as of much less use, than any other Miracle, and assigning that, as the very reason, why it was one of the first, which God thought fit to recall. “ It might be serviceable, says “ Dr. *Dodwell*, in the propagation of the Gos-
 “ pel, yet was the least convincing of any to
 “ gain-sayers—and could be no proof ante-
 “ cedently to the unconverted. As soon as
 “ this use of it ceased, or was attainable by hu-
 “ man means, the supernatural gift itself ceased
 “ also, and therefore ceased the first of any.”
 “ This gift, says Dr. *Church*, would enable
 “ them to preach the Gospel to people of dif-
 “ ferent nations, but would not evince the au-
 “ thority of their mission. If this be allowed,
 “ we shall soon discern the reason, why the gift
 “ of tongues might cease before other Miracles.
 “ When once a sufficient number of converts
 “ was made in any country, and instructed in
 “ the nature of our religion, these or at least the
 “ principal part of them, were ordained, and
 “ sent to teach their countrymen. And as they
 “ wanted no gift of tongues, to enable them to
 “ do this, so we have no reason to think, that
 “ God would continue such a Miracle any
 “ longer than was necessary: whereas these very
 “ persons might want and did want the assistance
 “ of other Miracles then, not onely to confirm
 “ the word, but to support themselves and
 “ others, who were eminent sufferers for the
 “ truth.

“ truth [1].” Dr. *Dodwell* had given the very same reason before him, and must therefore have the honor of it. “ When the Apostles, says he, and others the first Martyrs of Christianity, qualified with this endowment, had once propagated the Gospel, and made converts in many places, the natives of those places were able to carry on the design, and without any Miracle were qualified to teach their own countrymen, in the several languages, wherein they were born [2].”

Thus we see, how readily they can dress up an hypothesis, and apply it presently as an allowed fact, to support the opinion which they are defending. They suppose, that when the first and gifted Preachers of the Gospel, had made a number of Converts in any barbarous country, they immediately left the whole care and administration of it, to those barbarous Converts, who, by preaching the word to their countrymen in their own native language, superseded all farther use of *the gift of tongues*. A mere imaginary scheme, without the least foundation in reason, history, or experience! The Jewish converts, indeed, who were previously instructed in all the main principles, on which Christianity is founded, might soon become masters of the mystery of the Gospel, and be qualified to teach it, as it was opened and explained to them by their own scriptures. But to converts of barbarous nations and strange lan-

[1] Ch. p. 74.

[2] Dod. p. 91.

guages,

guages, utterly unacquainted with every principle, which bore any relation either to Judaism or Christianity, the case was quite different, and to acquire a competent knowledge of the Christian doctrine must have been a work of much time and great difficulty, so as to be hardly attainable at all in any degree of perfection except to a very few. It is incredible therefore, that any of those Barbarians, though converted to a general belief and profession of faith in Christ, should ever have been intrusted by the primitive planters of the Gospel, with the important charge of converting the rest of their country, by preaching it, and administering its sacred rites and offices. Nay, experience has evinced the contrary, and shewn, that either no such custom had ever obtained, or that it was wholly fruitless and ineffectual from the very beginning; since in all the barbarous nations of the world, no footstep has ever been discovered of any succession of native Preachers, nor any remains indeed of Christianity itself, though it is confidently affirmed to have been preached to them all. Nor have I ever read or heard, that any such method has ever been practised, or thought to be practicable, by the Missionaries of these modern ages; for how great soever their harvest may have been found, yet all the laborers in it have constantly been supplied from time to time from Christian countries.

The first care of all modern Missionaries, in qualifying themselves for a due discharge of their
their

their mission, is by great study and pains to acquire a competent skill of the language of that country, to which they are destined, for without this, all their labors, they know, would be vain and fruitless. *Francis Xavier*, called *the Apostle of the Indies*, as I have elsewhere observed, complains in one of his letters, that he found himself to be nothing better than a mute statue among the barbarians, till he had learnt the rudiments of their tongue. This previous use of the language, acquired by the modern Missionaries, answers the purpose of the gift of tongues in the primitive Missionaries; and the arts and sciences with which they are commonly well furnished, supply the place of their Miracles. For in barbarous nations, whatever exceeds that degree of power or skill in man, which they had ever seen exerted before, it will have the same effect as a miraculous gift, in exciting admiration, and a reverence to the persons who perform it. Yet, with all these qualities and endowments, managed with the utmost art and dexterity of Jesuitical policy, the whole, which the Romish Missions have been able to effect in *China*, where they have long had a sort of establishment; under the protection and encouragement of the Court itself, is, to compound the matter as it were between the two religions, by forming a motley sort of worship out of the rites of them both, and humoring the genius of the country, so as to admit their *Confucius* to a partnership of honor with *Jesus* himself.

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But let us return to the state of the primitive Church, in which the *gift of tongues*, according to the opinion of all Divines, has ever been held the most necessary of all others to the propagation of the Gospel. And this same necessity of it was so far from having been superseded in those primitive ages, that it continued in its full force through all the succeeding ages, and appears to be as much wanted at this day, as it was in the very earliest days, as it is confirmed and declared by the experience of all Missionaries. It is surprizing then, that these two Miracles of Raising the dead, and of Tongues, so useful and important to the cause of the Gospel, should vanish of a sudden and cease together so early in the Christian Church: and if one of them, as these Doctors contend, was withdrawn, because it was no longer of any use; how will they account for the cessation of the other, which, as themselves own, continued still to be useful and even necessary for those new converts among the *Barbarians* whom they talk of, and to whom the preaching of the Gospel was committed, though they had no occasion for the gift of tongues, yet wanted, as they tell us, the assistance of other Miracles on many accounts? And none surely could be more serviceable to them, than that of *raising the dead*. On the whole, then, After all the real difficulties, which are found on the one side, and all the evasive shifts, which are offered on the other, what can we reasonably think or say of these two Miracles,

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which

which are supposed to have been withdrawn, as soon almost as they were claimed, but what I have already intimated of one of them, that they never subsisted at all after the days of the Apostles, but having been rashly claimed by *Irenæus*, or imposed upon him by others of more craft, yet found upon trial, too difficult to be maintained, were presently laid aside, and suffered to expire with their Author ?

But I have offered one particular objection to the reality of this gift of Tongues, which I take to be of the greatest weight, as it is expressed by me in the following words : “ It is very remarkable, that this primitive Bishop, who ascribes it so liberally to others, appears to have been in great want of it himself, for the propagation of the Gospel in his own Diocese among the *Celtæ* or *Gauls* ; where, as Dr. *Cave* interprets his words, *It was not the least part of his trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the country, a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1].”

To this Dr. *Dodwell* answers, “ that I mention this objection in such a manner, as betrays a consciousness, on my part, that Dr. *Cave* had here made a mistake, and said more for *Irenæus*, than ever he had said for himself ; yet because it sounded for my purpose, I could not pass it over [2].” And in the next page he adds ; “ Dr. *Middleton* did not

[1] *Free Inq.* p. 120.

[2] *Dodw.* p. 88.

“ chuse

“ chuse to take this interpretation upon him-
 “ self, but leaves it upon Dr. *Cave*, and we must
 “ place it among the *few oversights* of that ex-
 “ cellent writer.—But if this be a *gross mistake*,
 “ and nothing to his purpose, he makes an ob-
 “ servation of his own, on this head, which he
 “ thinks important.”—Dr. *Church* answers also
 in the same strain, and says; “ Our Author as-
 “ serts, that *Irenæus* wanted this Miracle him-
 “ self for the propagation of the Gospel among
 “ the *Gauls*—and Dr. *Cave* indeed says, that
 “ this is plainly intimated by *Irenæus*, that he
 “ was forced to learn the language of the coun-
 “ try—but *Irenæus’s* words express onely, *that*
 “ *he was for the most part employed in a barbarous*
 “ *language* [1].”

For my own part, since my interpretations,
 how right and clear soever, are sure to be
 suspected and contradicted by all writers of the
 same zeal and genius with these Doctors, so I
 have always been glad, as oft as I have found it
 in my power, to confirm them by the testimony
 of some more favored Author, whose learning
 they admire, and whose principles and ortho-
 doxy they reverence. This I have done in the
 present case, by sheltering myself under the au-
 thority of Dr. *Cave*, a writer after their own
 hearts, and whose judgement is usually decisive
 with them in all cases, and ought certainly to be
 so in this, where it appears to be unquestion-
 ably true. For in flat contradiction to these

[1] Ch. p. 262.

Doctors, I here affirm, that I was so far *from being conscious of any mistake made by Doctor Cave*, in his exposition of *Irenæus's* words, that it then appeared, and still appears to me, as certain and demonstrable, that he has given us the true meaning of them, and the onely one indeed, which they will bear.

This sense, however, though plain and obvious, is rejected by our Doctors, it does not suit with their scheme: and Doctor *Dodwell*, according to custom, presents us with the whole passage, and his own translation of it, of which I shall here transcribe as much as relates to our purpose. “But you will not expect from us, “*who reside among the Gauls, and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect*, any artificial composition of words, which we have not learned; “nor the force of an Orator, which we have not “aimed at,” &c. Now the words with which alone we are concerned, and on which the question wholly turns, are these, *καὶ περὶ βάρβαρον διάλεκτον τὸ πλεῖστον ἀσχολούμενων*, which Dr. *Dodwell* has rendered, *and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect*. A translation flat and insipid, and carrying no distinct sense or idea, which a reader will easily perceive: yet the words themselves have a force in them, which evidently declares their proper meaning, and which I translate thus; *you will not expect from me, who reside among the Celtæ, and the greatest part of whose leisure is intirely employed upon a barbarous dialect, any artificial composition of words, &c.*

Now

Now the single quæſtion ariſing from this paſſage is, *in what way could Irenæus's leiſure be ſo greatly occupied by this barbarous dialect?* to which Dr. Dodwell makes no other Answer but this, "If any man can find out in theſe words, *that Irenæus was put to difficulties in learning the language of the Gauls*, he will diſcover, what I cannot perceive is alluded to. The words have no reference at all to that quæſtion; and if we were to draw inferences from them, I think they would rather incline to the contrary [1]." Dr. Church is ſomewhat more explicit, and tells us, "that his leiſure may full as well be underſtood to have been taken up *in uſing, and ſpeaking, and writing a barbarous language, as in learning it*. Nay, the former ſays he, is a better excuſe, and more to his purpoſe, than the other would have been, as continually converſing in a rough and unpoliſhed language, is more apt to ſpoil the ſtyle, than the learning it [2]."

But nothing ſurely can be more weak and frivolous, than this account of the matter. To imagine, that *Irenæus's* leiſure was taken up *by writing this barbarous dialect*, is quite ridiculous; for what can we ſuppoſe him to have written in it? Our Doctors perhaps would tell us, his Sermons; which they find a taſk of ſome trouble to themſelves: but theſe early Preachers had no ſuch cuſtom: were no ſlaves to the labor either of writing, or even compoſing them: they

[1] Dodw. p. 89.

[2] Ch. p. 262.

delivered with all simplicity, what they conceived upon the spot, and poured out those lessons of piety and Christianity, which they themselves practised, and were desirous to infuse into the people. Besides; all the works, which *Irenæus* ever wrote for the public, and which remained after his death, are declared, by all the Antients, to have been written in Greek: and the five books against Heresies, his capital work, is still extant in that language, which was his native tongue. So that his leisure could not be so much taken up by writing the *Celtic* dialect; and much less could the mere use of speaking it, or of preaching in it occasionally to the people, engross so large a share of it, as to be the occasion of that difficulty, and continual employment to him, of which he seems to complain.

But here, another question naturally occurs, in which the reader, by this time, may be impatient to be satisfied,—that is, *by what means Irenæus could acquire the use of this barbarous dialect, which gave him so much trouble?* On this head our Doctors are wholly silent: they do not chuse to affirm directly, that it was infused into him *by inspiration*; yet that is the thing, which they proppse to insinuate; since they have not suggested the least intimation of any other way. But this notion of its being the effect of *the gift of tongues* or of *inspiration*, is absolutely inconsistent with *Irenæus's* own account of it. A dialect infused by God could not possibly create
any

any difficulty to him, either in learning, speaking, or writing it, since the perfect use of it would be communicated at once, and it would flow from him as freely as his native tongue: much less can we imagine, that it would debase the purity of any other more valuable or useful language, of which he was previously possessed, since that would be a real injury to him, and while it enabled him to preach the Gospel in one particular place, would render him less able to preach it with the same force in another.

To sum up this argument therefore in a few words. Since *Irenæus* expressly declares, that the greatest part of his leisure was employed upon a barbarous dialect: and the word *ἀσχολία*, which he here uses, implies a leisure particularly devoted to literary studies; and since he intimates at the same time, that his continual attention to this dialect had disqualified him in some degree from writing with any elegance in the Greek tongue, it is impossible, that he could be speaking of any language inspired into him, or of any thing else, but of the necessity which he was under of learning this rude dialect, to which he was an utter stranger, by his own pains and study: a task of much time and labor, and what would not only create infinite trouble to him, before he could acquire a free use of it, but would naturally corrupt his style and manner of writing in any other language. And thus, after all the silly cavils and evasive shifts of these answerers, Dr. *Cave*, we find, has given

us the true interpretation of this passage, where he tells us, *that it was not the least part of Irenæus's trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the Celtæ, a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1].

I have dwelt the longer on this article, because all my antagonists insist, that these very Fathers, who attest the miraculous gifts of their several ages, were, above all other Christians, the most eminently indued with them, though they themselves make not the least claim to them, but ascribe them always, either *to the Christian people in general, or to mean and illiterate laymen, women and boys*. For these Advocates of the miraculous gifts are very sensible, that it would go a great way towards destroying the general claim of them, if, while the lowest of the Christians are affirmed to have possessed them in a large measure, *the Martyrs, Pastors, and Bishops* of the Church should appear to have been in want of them, even for the necessary discharge of their pastoral functions; for which reason they attempt, as far as they are able, to invalidate the credit of this fact, or to elude the force of it at least, by several different expedients:

Dr. Dodwell observes, how in a testimony, which I have cited from *Irenæus*, it is said, “*that all, who were true Disciples of Christ, wrought Miracles in his name; in which character Irenæus himself, and the rest of the*

[1] Cave, p. 120.

“ primitive

“ primitive writers before him, must be included ; — and that there was a plain reason why they should usually lay the stress on the meanest people, as working them, not as excluding their superiors, but because the mention of these, who were the least capable of craft and fraud, must be most convincing to Gainfayers — then he adds what he calls the true reason, why the Primitive Fathers did not mention themselves on this head, which really was, to avoid any ostentation, and to do the greater honor to Christianity, by shewing, that the meanest of the Christian professors had the same gifts, when they happened to have any contest with the Heathens [1].” Dr. *Church* also, according to custom, entertains us with the same story, and says; “ that tho’ some of these powers are represented as common to Christians in general, yet we may easily apprehend, that they were more eminently vouchsafed to the Pastors and Governors of the Church, who were under the greatest difficulty, and to whom the business of converting the Heathen world peculiarly belonged [2].” “ And if God was pleased to communicate such divine gifts at that time to any persons for the benefit of the Church, he would favor these principal persons with them. Some indeed are said to have been imparted even to private Laymen. But ’tis hard to think, while these possessed them,

[1] Dodw. p. 47, 51.

[2] Ch. p. 110.

“ that the Bishops and Martyrs of the Church
 “ should be without them, and that those who
 “ succeeded the Apostles, in the great work of
 “ propagating the Gospel, did not also succeed
 “ them in being favored with Miracles. And
 “ the reason, as he imagines, why none of these
 “ venerable Saints made any pretension to them,
 “ either for themselves or the Apostolic Fathers
 “ before them, was the mere Effect of their mo-
 “ desty and humility, and *to avoid the very ap-
 “ pearance of vanity and ostentation* [1].”

But from this single passage, which I have
 been examining, all this refined reasoning is
 overturned at once; for it clearly informs us,
 that *Irenæus*, tho’ he affirms this gift of tongues
 to have been common in his days, and *that he*
had heard many speaking all kinds of languages in
the Church, was himself still destitute of it, tho’
 the Bishop and leader of them all, and obliged
 with great difficulty to learn *the barbarous dialect*
of the Celtæ, among whom he resided, before
 he could do any good upon them, or was qual-
 ified to propagate the Gospel in his own Dio-
 cese. Our Doctors however, tho’ they think it
 necessary at present to deny this fact; yet being
 aware, that they may be driven at last to own
 it as true, seem to be providing a sort of retreat
 beforehand, by changing their tone, and redu-
 cing their answers to a pitch more conformable
 to such a concession: for after all which they
 have been alledging, to prove these Fathers to

[1] Ch. p. 116, 117.

have

have been chiefly instructed with the Miraculous Powers of the Church, it is pleasant to observe, with what ease and calmness Dr. *Cburch* seems prepared to give it all up again: for speaking to this very point of *Irenæus's want of the gift of tongues*, he treats it as a thing of no importance, nor worthy of our *inquiry, whether he wanted it or not*: and if the whole difficulty were granted, and *Irenæus* allowed to have been destitute of it; it could not amount, he says, to an objection, nor overthrow his positive testimony, that such a power was really subsisting in the Church, and indulged to many other persons, wholly obscure and unknown [1].”

And now after an impartial review and comparison of all, that has been alledged in this controversy, on the one side or the other, I have laid before the reader the genuin state of three miraculous gifts, the most important, and useful of any, which were claimed by the primitive Church. It will be needless therefore to trouble myself with the examination of any more of them; since the rest, as our Doctors themselves will allow, must follow the fate of these three, and all of them stand or fall together; as being all built upon the same foundation, and supported by the same evidence. But in the article of healing the sick, since Dr. *Dodwell* seems to lay a singular stress on one particular Miracle, and the clear attestation which is given to it by *Tertullian*, I shall just add a word or two, which may help to illustrate the true nature of it.

[1] Ch. p. 263.

A
P R E F A C E
TO AN INTENDED
A N S W E R
TO ALL THE
O B J E C T I O N S
MADE AGAINST THE
F R E E I N Q U I R Y.

P R Æ F A C E.

IT was easy to foresee, that the publication of my *Free Inquiry* would presently raise up against me, as my *Introductory Discourse* had done before, many fierce Adversaries, with Answers and Confutations of it, charging me with desperate designs, and pernicious consequences; with calumniating the Holy Fathers; misrepresenting their testimonies; and straining them to senses quite different from their own. For this is no more, than what I had reason to expect, from the very nature of my work; the purpose of which is, to extirpate an inveterate opinion, which has ever been held up by the authority of the Clergy, and obtains credit at this day, in every Church, and sect of Christians whatsoever.

Opinions of this kind, possessed of the public belief, and thought to be connected with the public religion, necessarily create many strong prejudices in their favor, and many motives of different kinds, for the perpetual support and defence of them; ever ready to give the alarm, against all free inquiry, and to excite a clamor against the Inquirer, from all, who had ever preached them from the pulpit, or maintained them from the press; all, who thought them
true,

true, or found them useful to their ease, their authority, or their fortunes: whose resentment on such occasions will always be more strong, in proportion, as the opinions in dispute happen to be weak and likely to be disgraced by the trial.

It was impossible therefore, that my argument could be received with indifference in this inquisitive nation, unless the incapacity of the author to illustrate and adorn it, had exposed it to the neglect of men of taste and politeness. But since the approbation, which it has met with, gives me reason to think, that I have not greatly failed in that part: and since the truth or at least the high probability of it is loudly acknowledged by all disinterested readers; I do not know how to account for that virulence of zeal, with which it is opposed still by the generality of these writers, but by imputing it to their prejudices, or habitual bigotry, or to some motive especially of interest, which, of course, bars all entrance to opinions, though ever so probable, if not stamped by an authority, which can sweeten them with rewards.

For to what other principle can we ascribe, that uniform and perpetual contradiction, which they give to every single article of the Free Inquiry? Some of them do not scruple to declare, *That there is not the least pretence to any sort of evidence; nor so much as the shadow of an argument in the whole work*: others, though they allow one or two things perhaps *to be plausible*, yet treat them

them presently as bubbles, and blow them at once into air, as void of all solidity : nay, they turn my whole argument so strongly against me, as to make it prove the very contrary, to what I proposed to establish by it. Instead of diminishing the credit of the Fathers, they affirm it to be *a clear vindication of their honor*; and instead of exposing *their credulity, to be a proof only of my own*: instead of demonstrating the *cessation of the primitive miracles*, they call it *a demonstration of their continuance*; and instead of *-serving the interests of Protestantism, the strongest temptation in the world to make men Papists*: in short, they profess to find nothing else in my book, from one end of it to the other, but a succession of *downright forgeries and falsifications*.

Now what instruction can we expect, in a question of this importance, from answerers, so void of candor; who, with a solemn air and pretext of religion, can offer such an insult to the common sense of every reader? For, notwithstanding all their confident assertions, it is certain, that nothing can be made more evident by any book, than these two points are, by the Free Inquiry: first, that the Facts and Testimonies produced in it, must necessarily *detract somewhat from the characters of the Fathers, and the implicit faith, which has been given to them in their reports of the primitive miracles*: secondly, that the general argument of it *strikes at the very root of Popery*, and must consequently be fatal to it,

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wherever it may happen to be received in any Christian country.

But let the bigoted, the interested, or the powerful, exert themselves as much as they please, it is a truth confirmed to us by the experience of all ages, that all the opinions, which now reign in the world, how strongly soever established, or how antient soever they may be; if not grounded originally on nature, but on the consent only and contrivance of men, will be sure in the end, to find the same fate with old buildings: which, while they acquire a sort of veneration to themselves from their very age, are every day gradually weakened and insensibly consumed by that same age; till being found at last rotten and ruinous, they are demolished, by common consent, as unable, either to stand, or to be supported any longer. Such will be the fate of the opinion, now defended by my Antagonists: for the fullness of time seems to be come, or at least to be nearly approaching, when we may be allowed to laugh without offence at the pious frauds of the antient Fathers, and add the stories of their miracles to that numerous list of impostures; to those *Oracles, Auguries, Divinations, Magic, Witches, &c.* which have all flourished in their turns, and triumphed over the senses and reason of men, in every age and nation of the world.

This I may now augurate, with the greater assurance, not only from the consciousness of my own conviction, grounded on an impartial

inquiry into the case, but from the apparent weakness and impertinence of all the several Answers which have been published in contradiction to it. For though many things are urged in them with great confidence, which, to readers of little learning, may seem to charge me with ignorance or blunders, or even willful misrepresentation, all which I shall wipe off at once, whenever I find occasion to touch upon them; yet there is not a single argument in them all, which can reasonably be thought to invalidate, or in any degree to weaken, the capital position of my book. So that, after all the violence of this attack, I find myself at liberty to affirm still, with the same conviction, what I affirmed originally in my Title-page; *That we have no sufficient reason to believe, upon the authority of the Primitive Fathers, that any miraculous powers were continued to the Church, after the days of the Apostles.*

Such an affirmation indeed from me, may justly be thought exceptionable; who am too much interested in the question, to be considered as an equal Judge in it: but besides the confirmation, which it has received from the general voice of my readers, the public has seen a proof of it, superior to all exception, from the generous labors of two or three Clergymen, who, after a strict examination of the merits of each cause, have taken the pains to shew, by a strong and masterly force of reasoning, that the

argument, both of *the Introductory Discourse*, and of *the Free Inquiry*, remains unhurt and unshaken, by all the studied cavils and subtil objections, which the most expert and zealous of my Adversaries have been able to alledge against it.

The persons, whom I mean, are utter strangers to me; and cannot be supposed therefore to have written out of any partial or personal regard to me; nor from any other motive indeed, but a sincere love of truth; since nothing else could have force enough to engage Clergymen in the defence of an opinion, openly decried and disgraced by those superiors through whose hands the rewards and honors of their profession are chiefly distributed. For though the cause of the Free Inquiry, be the cause of Protestantism itself, and what, above all things, tends to unite its divided sects, and to strengthen its common interests; yet, by a sort of policy not easy to be accounted for, the insinuations of a few peevish, narrow-minded, bigoted Churchmen, have had weight enough to render it suspected and odious to the leaders of this free and protestant State.

It is not my design, in the present work, to enter into a minute discussion of the objections which may be found in all, or in any, indeed, of the several answers to my Free Inquiry, but to select such onely as seem to be worthy of any notice, or to carry any weight with them: and since

since the two Doctors, *Dodwell* and *Church*, appear to be the most applauded and relied upon by all, who profess any zeal for the cause which they defend, it shall be my chief business, to examine the merit of their performances, not omitting, at the same time, to pay due respect to the rest, wherever I find them applying either the same argument with any new force, or a different one, which may afford any opportunity either of instruction or entertainment to the reader.

But before I descend to the examination of these particulars, it may be of use towards illustrating the general quæstion, to premise a few observations on the present state of it, and to consider, how it now stands, after the correction, which it has received from the hands of these Inquisitors.

1. One of the objections, which I at first proposed to the reality of the Primitive Miracles, was this; that none of our writers, who maintained the continuance of them beyond the days of the Apostles, had ever been able to settle the bounds between true and false miracles, or to mark out, by any probable rule, the exact time when the true ceased, and the false began. So that a serious Inquirer into primitive antiquity must ever be perplexed with this doubt, that the pious reverence, which he comes disposed to pay to the supposed interposition of God, in this or that pretended instance of it, may be nothing

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else but the effect of credulity and superstition, and a criminal compliance with the frauds and fictions of men.

My Antagonists are very sensible of this difficulty; and have all, in their turns, attempted to give some solution of it: but the vanity of their attempts, instead of removing, has confirmed it only the more, and shewn it to be inexplicable. For example; Mr. *Jackson*, who appeared the first, asserts the continuance of the miraculous powers no farther than to the time of *Origen*; by which he intimates his suspicion, of one half at least of the third Century. The second, an Anonymous Letter-writer, defends the subsistence of them, to the end of that century. Yet, even before that time, while he supposes the Church to be guided and guarded still by all its miraculous powers, he declares it to have been greatly degenerated from its original purity. Dr. *Church* confines his defence also to the three first centuries; not meddling with any miracles of a later date; nor yet determining, as he says, *on the one side or the other, either for their truth or their falsehood*; but supposing, that among *the many fabulous accounts of the succeeding ages, there might be a mixture still of some which were genuine*. Dr. *Dodwell* considers the three first Centuries in general, as the proper period of true miracles, yet thinks it necessary still, to take in some share also of the fourth, as far as to the establishment of Christianity by the civil power; and for the rest, contents himself
by

by saying; *that many wonderful works might probably be wrought afterwards for some great ends.*

Mr. *Whiston* alone has ventured to launch out beyond the middle of this century; taking every thing for Gospel, that he meets with in the Church, till *the heresy of Athanasius*, as he calls it, by corrupting the pure stream of its faith, provoked God to withdraw his gifts, and give it up to the wiles and delusions of *Satan*. Mr. *Brooke*, the last, and most voluminous of all these answerers, after a full deliberation on what the rest had severally offered, seems to prefer the opinion of the first, in restraining the period of undoubted miracles *to the days of Origen*: for though he declares them to have been withdrawn *between the time of Origen and Chrysostom*; yet he signifies his suspicion of all, which are later than the first, and affirms all to have been certainly forged, which are attested by the last of those Fathers.

This difficulty then, about fixing the æra of the miraculous powers, continues still in its full force, as a sort of presumptive argument, against the reality of any such powers after the days of the Apostles. But my Antagonists, after all their pains, to account for it, finding it at last a clog upon their system, which they are unable to remove, content themselves by dismissing it with an air of contempt, and declaring it, to be of no consequence at all; whereas, if their hypothesis be admitted, that true and false miracles were promiscuously subsisting in the primitive ages,

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till the true happened, we know not when, nor how, to be finally withdrawn, nothing can be more certain, than that it would be of the greatest moment to us, to be able to separate the one from the other. For as true miracles must ever be wrought for some great and beneficial end, and the false, on the contrary, for some crafty and selfish ends ; so the one would lead us of course to a religion worthy of God ; the other into error and superstition, and a worship consequently offensive to him. But let us consider a little the nature of this hypothesis, which these Champions here maintain. They suppose, that true and false miracles were indiscriminately wrought at the same time, and in the same Church, without any rule of discerning the one from the other, till the true ceased, and the false prevailed : and that the Church continued ever after in that state, the perpetual dupe of false miracles, down to the time of the Reformation. But nothing surely can be more absurd, than to imagine, that there ever was, or ever could be, any such jumble and concurrence of true and false miracles in any age, or that the false especially should beat out the true, and the craft of the Devil supersede the power of God. For whatever coloring they may give to their hypothesis, and in what solemn words soever they may cloath it, that is the genuin consequence of it. Mr. *Whiston* indeed expresses it, by saying ; *that the forgeries of Athanasius, by their prevalence in the Church, provoked God to withdraw his miraculous*

*culous powers,** and give it up to the delusions of Satan : yet the fact is the same, as it is affirmed by them all, that after an indiscriminate subsistence, or struggle as it were of true and false miracles, through a century or two, the true insensibly expired and the false onely remained. The absurdity of which notion, as it naturally flows from the cause which they defend, must yield a strong presumption in favor of my opinion, that, after the days of the Apostles, the miraculous pretensions of the succeeding ages were all of the same kind ; contrived by the craft of a few, and imposed upon the credulity of the many.

2. The reader will remember, that when I published *the Introductory Discourse*, I found our Divines, who were chiefly intrusted with the defence of our religion against Infidels and Heretics, frankly asserting the continuance of the miraculous powers, not onely to the fourth, but to the fifth and sixth centuries, and ranking them all upon a level, with the very earliest after the days of the Apostles. My view therefore in that treatise, was to expose the extravagance of that bigotry ; and give a check to the prevalence of principles, which are absolutely fatal to the Protestant cause : and my attempt has had this clear effect, not onely of putting to shame and silence the rashness of those zealots, whom I then particularly attacked, but of making their successors in the present cause, so cautious and shy as we now see

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see

see them, of touching even upon the fourth century. So that, if Dr. *Chapman* should once more think fit, to undertake the defence of Symeon Stylites, and his miracles, upon the illustrious authority of the Great Theodoret; or should a second *Berriman* affirm the divinity of that Creed, said to be delivered from heaven by the Virgin Mary, to Gregory, the wonder-worker; or insist again on the credibility of those Monkish tales, which are related of Pope Gregory the Great, they would be hissed off the stage, even by their old friends; as the advocates of a superstition, too gross to deserve a moment's attention. Here then we see one great and manifest advantage actually gained to the Protestant cause, by the argument of the Free Inquiry; in clearing us at once, from the greatest part of that incumbrance which had hitherto clogged and blunted the vigor of our defence against Rome. For out of four successive centuries, to which the Divines of this Protestant Church were roundly ascribing all the kinds of miraculous gifts, and leading us insensibly into the very depths of Popery; the Free Inquiry, by the confession of all its adversaries, has now freed us from the Impostures of two of them; or, if we reckon to the time of Origen, of two and an half: and I make no doubt, but that, in the issue of this controversy, it will free us in the same manner, from the rest, how averse soever their advocates may be, to give

give them up; and whatever clamor they may raise about the consequences.

Since my Antagonists, who appear to have known nothing of the state of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, which they now pretend to confute, have not yet learnt from it a right notion of the point in dispute between us: The position, which I affirm, is this; that after the days of the Apostles, no miraculous powers were continued to the Church, or the particular members of it, as a standing proof of the truth of the Gospel, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of the Heathens. This is what the Title of my work implies; what my whole reasoning turns upon; and what I have often signified in the course of it, to be my precise meaning. Yet these answerers treat my argument, as if it absolutely rejected every thing miraculous, whether that within the Church, by the agency of men, or any other occasions by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles, whenever he thinks fit, no body, I dare say, will deny: but whether he has wrought any or not, since the days of the Apostles, is an inquiry which I do not meddle with; the single point, which I maintain, is, *that the Primitive Church had no standing power of working any.* This distinction was seen at once by those writers, who have appeared in the defence of my argument; and who have justly reprov'd these Antagonists for their neglect of it, as being necessary

cessary to a right management of the controversy, as well as obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this public admonition, we find them still declaring it, to be a mere evasion and subterfuge, never intended by me at first, but an after-thought, contrived to elude the force of some objections, which were found to press me [2].

But though the distinction be just and clear, my view in marking it out, was not to derive any advantage from it to my cause, for I knew none, which it could give, but merely to shorten the dispute, and prevent impertinent wranglings, on facts and instances, which have no relation to it: and it is certain that, if a due regard had been paid to it, it would have saved my answerers some trouble in several instances of that sort; and especially in the story of *Poly-carp's* martyrdom, on which they all now proceed to exert their utmost pains and zeal, in defending the miracles, which are ascribed to it, as if they were decisive, and utterly subversive of the main position of my book: whereas in truth whatever be the real character of them, may be, they are nothing to the purpose, as being neither wrought by any standing power in the Church, nor carrying any evidence, that any such power was then subsisting in it.

But if these miracles have no relation, as I say, to the present dispute, it is asked, for what

[1] Toll. 29. Lett. Def. 16.

[2] Ch. Pref. 8, 9.

reason

reason then did I introduce them into it? To which I answer, that it was for no other, than to expose the trifling and frivolous nature of them, and to shew, how fondly the Christians were disposed, in this very early and pious age, to give a miraculous turn to every unusual incident, which might happen to take place, on any important and affecting occasion. *****

SOME

SOME
CURSORY REFLECTIONS
ON THE
DISPUTE OR DISSENSION,
WHICH HAPPENED AT
A N T I O C H,
BETWEEN THE
APOSTLES PETER and PAUL:

A N D

On the Variations also or Inconsistencies, which
are found among the Four Evangelists, in their
different Accounts of the same Facts ;

IN ORDER TO DISCOVER

What Light these Facts afford Us, towards illustrating
the proper Notion of Inspiration, or that Measure of
it especially which was indulged to the Apostles and
Evangelists, and how far they may be of Use, if rightly
interpreted, towards determining the Controversies
which have been raised concerning the Proofs and
Evidences of the Christian Religion, as far at least as
they depend upon the Prophecies of the Old Testament,
which are cited for that Purpose in the New.

P R Æ F A C E.

SEVERAL of these pieces, which compose this Volume, were written by me many years ago; chiefly for my own information, on the occasion of certain controversies, then warmly agitated, concerning *the grounds and reasons* of the Christian religion; and especially on the prophecies of the Old Testament, which are cited in the New, and applied to the particular acts and circumstances of our Saviour's life. For when the enemies of revelation attempted to discredit those citations, as being neither fairly made, nor rightly applied; and our Divines, on the other hand, had nothing to offer in the defence of them, in which a man of sense could reasonably acquiesce; I was willing to try, whether, from my own examination of the case, I might not be able to draw out something more satisfactory; and if no solution of the difficulty could be found in the citations themselves, whether it might not be drawn from the characters of the Evangelists, who made and applied them—for this topic, I knew, tho' intimately connected with the question, was, what none of our common Advocates would venture to touch upon: whose fortunes in the Church depend, not on seeking out what is true, but on defending what is established; and

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on inventing expedients to puzzle, where they cannot confute an Adversary. But truth, as the Antients tell us, lies buried in the deep, and cannot be discovered, but by searching things to the bottom : and when produced to the public view, shines always the brightest, after it has been polished, as *Tully* says, by *the file of disputation*.

As to the effect of my searches into the particular subject here intimated, it is fully explained in the following sheets. For though the controversies, which gave birth to them, have long since been at an end, yet I flatter myself, that they may still be seasonable and serviceable, towards checking that spirit of disaffection, which, in every part of the Kingdom, is visibly exerting itself, against the established religion, by all the various arts, which Popery, Methodism, and Infidelity can supply : the growth of all which has of late years been greatly complained of by the Clergy. For as this increasing evil is owing, partly to certain articles, publicly professed and imposed by our Church, which are justly liable to exception ; and partly to groundless prejudices, and false notions of religion in general, conceived by the weak, and confirmed in them by the crafty ; so it cannot possibly be cured by any other method, than by placing the common religion of Christians on its right foundation, the Gospel, and clearing our particular system of it from all just offence, and reducing it to its original simplicity and conformity
 I with

with the natural law or reason of man ; which, in all quæstions whatsoever, is the primary guide and ultimate test of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, to the whole human species.

In the Heathen world, though there were always many Infidels and Heretics with regard to the established religion, there were no Dissenters from the established modes of worship, and very little disturbance given to the State by the intemperance of their religious contests : yet this was not owing to a want of zeal for the popular religion, in any order of men, for they all professed the greatest, but to a reasonable way of thinking and acting with respect to it. The wiser sort were universally of opinion, that the multitude were to be deceived and allured to their duty, by fictions and fabulous tales, contrived to instill a superstitious reverence for the rites of their Ancestors, and a firm belief of their divine origin. This therefore was the common principle of all the politer nations, and particularly of the antient Romans ; whose religion seems, of all others, to have been the best calculated, to promote the general good and prosperity of the Republic [a]. But though they were persuaded of the necessity of putting this deceit upon the populace, they thought it necessary at the same time, that the better sort

[a] Hæc Pontifex (Scævola) nosse populos non vult — expedire igitur existimat, falli in religione Civitates, quod dicere etiam in libris rerum divinarum ipse Varro non dubitat. August. de Civ. D. l. iv. c. 27.

should be treated in a different manner: with which view, while they enjoined a strict observance of their country's rites, as an indispensable duty on all, they made no scruple, to laugh at the folly of those, who took them for divine, and to publish their free sentiments upon them without any reserve; that all the liberal part of their fellow-citizens might understand, on what ground their religion stood, and by being of one mind, on a subject so interesting, might live with more ease to themselves, and good will towards each other.

Thus in the writings of *Cicero*, *Varro*, and others, we see the most sacred articles of their religion ridiculed with a freedom, which is apt to surprize us, till we reflect on the motives of it, and perceive, that it gave no scandal to men even of the strictest virtue and morality: for writings of this kind never reach to the multitude, or disturb the course of the popular worship; being read onely by a few in comparison, of a speculative and philosophic turn; who reap no small pleasure, to find themselves at liberty to think freely and rationally on subjects, which fill the minds of the vulgar with anxious scruples and superstitious fears.

Now as this conduct of the Heathens procured both peace and reverence to their false religions, so it may furnish some useful hints for our conduct, with regard to the true one: whose superior excellence and allowed divinity

should oblige us to guard it with the stricter care, from all mixture of human inventions. If any thing therefore of this sort has ever been introduced into it, through the inadvertence, or political views of its guardians; or any thing inserted, out of condescension to popular prejudices, or a regard to the public quiet, which in some cases perhaps may be reasonable; it ought however to be so distinguished and explained, as to be understood, and treated agreeably to its nature by men of sense; not arbitrarily imposed and enforced indifferently upon all, by the fictitious pretence of a divine authority.

For if the studious and inquisitive part of the nation, who search and judge of things for themselves, were made easy on these points, and allowed to think and speak of the popular doctrines of the Church, what they find agreeable to fact and the testimony of their senses, it would be the most effectual means of silencing those uncharitable disputes and dissensions, which are so frequent among us, on subjects generally so trifling, as to be unworthy of the zeal or attention of a Christian, or so subtil and abstruse, as to be incomprehensible to all, and unfit therefore, to be the objects of faith to any. The arbitrary imposition of opinions naturally creates a reluctance to the reception of them; and as in the collision of bodies, so of minds, the repelling force is equal to that, which impells: but if opinions were proposed to the public, with a la-

titude of interpretation, which left every one at liberty, to receive them according to his own sense, and to embrace them either as true, or to acquiesce in them as expedient; it would cut off both the pretence, and the inclination to wrangle about them; and we should enjoy them with the same ease, as we do the common air or water, take just as much of them as we please, without offence or injury to any one else. By this means the virtuous and the liberal would become united in affection, as well as opinion, and live not only with more charity towards each other, but by their example and moderation, would lead the multitude also, by degrees, into more reasonable notions of religious duties; so far at least, as to prevent them from being seduced into any extravagance of zeal and principles, either Popish or Fanatical, which might create danger and disturbance to the peace of the kingdom.

The chief argument, by which the Papists draw our people from us, is the authority of the Catholic Church, supported by a perpetual succession of miracles, wrought in confirmation of those very rites and doctrines, which are now taught and practised at *Rome*. In confutation of which, I have shewn in a former Volume, how that whole system of worship, which we call Popery, and which distinguishes the religion of *Rome*, from that of Protestants, derived its birth from Paganism, and the corruption
of

of the primitive ages; was grounded on craft and fraud, and has been supported ever since by false and fictitious miracles. All which is so evident, from the clearest testimonies of antiquity, that it could not fail of extirpating Popery at once, out of every country, where it now prevails, if the power and policy of particular States did not find an interest in maintaining, what reason and religion jointly reject.

The other evil of Fanatical Enthusiasm, which has once overturned our whole constitution, and is now again at work towards the same end, is grounded chiefly on false notions, infused into weak minds, concerning those extraordinary gifts and illuminations, which were conferred upon the Apostles and first converts to Christianity; and, as these Enthusiasts also affirm, are still indulged in a large measure to themselves. Which extravagance I have endeavoured likewise to correct, in that same Volume, by shewing, that those miraculous gifts of the Gospel, of whatever kind they were, or for whatever purposes given, were peculiar to the circumstances of the Apostolic times, and never afterwards granted to any succeeding age: which same point I shall still farther illustrate, in the present Volume, where I shall explicate the nature of those wonderful powers, in their original and most flourishing state; when they were exercised by the Apostles themselves; which appears to be very little understood, or rather very much

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mistaken,

mistaken, by the generality of modern Divines; who, when pressed by the Adversaries of religion with difficulties, which they cannot readily solve, commonly take shelter under the authority of divine Inspiration, and the necessity of an implicit submission to the testimony of God.

But as this way of reasoning cannot be of any force with unbelievers, till the disputants be first agreed, both in their notion of Inspiration, and the certainty also of the fact, *that the Sacred writers were under the constant influence of it*; so to those, who conceive either a different sense of the word, or a different opinion of the thing, it is a mere *begging of the question*, and serves onely to weaken the evidence of our faith. My design therefore in this particular volume is, to correct the mistakes which commonly prevail on this article of Inspiration: and to inquire how far the Apostles and Evangelists appear to have been favored with it, and to have acted under the immediate direction of an infallible spirit. In the illustration of which, I have not insisted so much on the texts of Scripture, which, by refined and forced constructions, may frequently admit a variety of senses, and leave room for endless wrangling, as on the facts there recorded, which seem decisive and demonstrative of the point, into which I am inquiring.

For instance: no man, who is conversant with the New Testament, has ever scrupled to
own,

own, that before our Lord's Ascension, the Apostles, generally speaking, were in the condition of all other men, subject to frailty, error, and sin. For we find them sometimes envying and reproving one another; ignorant of their master's purpose; blundering about his words and meaning; and, out of fear, at last deserting and denying him. Which facts manifestly prove, that during this period of their Apostleship, they were not under the perpetual guidance of the Holy Ghost: though, in the same interval, they were indued, on certain occasions, with the miraculous power of *casting out Devils, raising the dead, and curing all diseases.*

After our Lord's Ascension, it is allowed again by all, that they were indued with a larger portion of the same divine gifts; by which their faith was confirmed, their understandings enlightened, their power of working miracles enlarged. But the question still is, how far this larger measure of power reached, and whether to an absolute infallibility and freedom from error: which must be determined by the same rule, by which we formed our judgement on the other period of their ministry; that is, by the facts and instances of their behaviour, delivered to us either by themselves or the other sacred writers. And if under this larger effusion of the Holy Ghost, we find the same marks of frailty upon them as before: if we find them differing from each other in points of fact, and sometimes from themselves

themselves in points of doctrine; quarrelling, dissembling, and temporizing, contrary to the truth of the Gospel, we shall be obliged from the same premises to draw the same conclusion, that they were not under the continual direction of an unerring spirit, but left still on ordinary occasions to the condition of ordinary men.

This is what I have particularly set forth in the two following Inquiries, by the evidence of facts and instances, which clearly demonstrate it, when stripped of the glosses and forced interpretations, which Commentators had fastened upon them in favor of their several systems and prejudices. And by the same method I have endeavoured also to explaine, in a particular Essay, the genuin state of the Gift of tongues, and all the other miraculous gifts, from the original history and effects of them, as they are described in the New Testament: from which it appears, that they were not permanent or lasting, but temporary onely, and adapted to special occasions, and when these were served, suspended presently, or withdrawn from the persons who had been endued with them.

Such was the information which I received, many years ago, from my inquiries into these subjects: which has appeared ever since so convincing to me, that I have been induced at last, to offer the same to the public; from a persuasion, that it may be of no small service to prevent, or to shorten at least many of our disputes;

disputes; as well by admonishing the Advocates of our religion, not to build their defence of it on a foundation, that will certainly fail them, as by letting its Adversaries also see, that though we grant them the greatest part of what their objections seem to aim at, the *genuine grounds and reasons of Christianity* will yet remain firm and unshaken.

S O M E

S O M E
 CURSORY REFLECTIONS
 O N T H E
 DISPUTE or DISSENSION,
 WHICH HAPPENED AT
A N T I O C H,
 BETWEEN THE
 APOSTLES *PETER* and *PAUL*.

THE history of this diffension between the two Apostles, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, is related by *Paul* himself, in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, in the following words :

C H A P. II.

11. *But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blaemd.*
12. *For before that certain men came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*
13. *And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*

14. *But*

14. *But when I saw, that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? &c.*

This fact is not mentioned in any other part of the New Testament: for St. *Luke*, who wrote the *Acts of the Apostles*, under the immediate direction of St. *Paul*, and describes the actions of this Apostle more largely than of all the rest, has not given the least hint of it; so that it is difficult to determine the time when it happened. We read indeed of great numbers converted to the faith of Christ at *Antioch*, by the ministry of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and of very high debates subsisting there, between the Jewish and Gentile converts, about the observance of the Mosaic rites [1]. But it is certain, that *Peter* was not concerned in those debates; for *Barnabas*, who was now carried away by his authority into the same dissimulation with him, was, at the time of those other disputes, a strenuous Advocate for Christian liberty, and being sent up with *Paul* to *Jerusalem*, to consult the Apostles and Elders concerning this very question, found *Peter* there, the first and forwardest in that Council, to declare his opinion, which the rest of them followed, *that since an end was now put to the difference between Jew and Gentile, they ought not to tempt God, by imposing that yoke upon*

[1] *Acts* xv. 1, 2.

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the Gentiles, which the Jews themselves had not been able to bear [1]. And in truth, all that we read concerning *Peter*, except in this single instance related by *Paul*, is intirely consonant to that declaration at *Jerusalem*, and shews him to have been more eminently convinced than the rest of his brethren, of the utter abolition of the Jewish ceremonies. For this was signified to him by a particular revelation from Heaven, in consequence of which, he was the first, who opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, by baptizing *Cornelius* and his family [2]: and in the Council at *Jerusalem*, was the mover of that opinion and Apostolic decree, by which the Gentile converts were set free from the yolk of *Moses*: yet notwithstanding all this conviction and zeal for Christian liberty, we find him temporizing still for fear of the Jews, and on that account openly accused of hypocrisy and prevarication by St. *Paul*.

It is certain, however, that from the earliest ages of the Church, this story has been a constant topic of raillery to the Sceptics and Unbelievers. *Porphyry*, the old enemy of our religion, takes occasion from it, “ to charge *Paul* “ with assuming falsely to himself the merit of “ facts which never really happened, in order to “ extol his own character and depress *Peter’s*, “ out of envy to his more eminent virtues: or, “ allowing the fact to be true, to accuse *Paul* “ of insolence and rashness, in reproving his su-

[1]. Acts v. 7, 8.

[2] Ib. x.

“ perior

“perior for a compliance, of which he himself
 “was notoriously guilty: or lastly, to impute
 “to both these great Apostles, a levity, incon-
 “stancy, and weakness of mind, which betray-
 “ed them into a conduct, unworthy of their
 “sacred character [1].”

These objections were thought so dishonorable to Christianity, by some of the ancient Fathers, that many nice and subtil interpretations were invented to evade the force of them. One of the first, which was applied to this purpose, in those primitive ages, was, the supposition of another person, of the name of *Cephas*, besides the Apostle, one of the seventy Disciples, eminent for his zeal and piety, with whom *Paul* had this dispute. This is mentioned by *Eusebius*, on the authority of *Clemens* of *Alexandria* [2]: and it is observed by the Critics, that though we now find the name of *Peter* in all our present copies of this text, yet many of them, in the first ages, had *Cephas* in the place of it: for nothing could possibly give birth to the hypothesis above mentioned, of a different person from

[1] Locum dari Porphyrio blasphemandi, si aut Petrum errasse, aut Paulum procaciter Apostolorum principem confutasse credatur. Hieron. Comment. in Ep. ad Galat. c. ii.

Ut blasphemantis Porphyrii impudentiam coerceret; qui Paulum & Petrum pue-

rili dicit inter se pugnasse certamine; immo, exarsisse Paulum in invidiam virtutum Petri; & ea scripsisse jactanter, quæ vel non fecerit, vel si fecerit, procaciter fecerit, id in alio reprehendens, quod ipse commiserit. Hieron.

[2] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 12.

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the Apostle, but the name of *Cephas* in that place, which was inserted probably for that very reason, of silencing the cavils of adversaries [1].

[1] Vid. Millii Edit. Nov. Testam. & not. in loc. *N.B.* As this reading of the Greek text was contrived to clear *Peter's* character from the blame here ascribed to him, so we have another instance in this same Chapter, of a similar accommodation of the old Latin text, made to clear *Paul's* character also from the charge of inconstancy: by means of which the Greek and Latin copies exhibited the 5th verse in a sense directly contrary to each other; the Greek, in that, which our English translation follows;

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; the Latin, without the negative particle;

To whom we gave way, by yielding to them for a season; which last sense is suitable indeed to the place, and what one would naturally expect from the verse preceding, which seems to assign a reason for a temporary compliance of the Apostle: and it is agreeable also to fact, and the real history of St. Paul's

conduct, from which it appears, that he did actually comply on certain occasions, and yield for a time to the prejudices of the Jews, in order to appease their resentment against him. [*Acts* xvi. 3. xviii. 18. xxi. 26.] So that several of the ancient Fathers preferred this reading and sense of the text: but after this contrariety between the Greek and Latin copies had subsisted through the seven first centuries of the Church, the authority of the Greek at last prevailed, as being more consonant to the general doctrine and tenor of this Epistle.

Itaque aut juxta Græcos Codices est legendum, *quibus neque ad horam*, aut, si latini exemplaris fides alicui placet, —secundum superiorem sensum accipere debemus, ut ad horam cessio, &c. Hieron. Comment. ad loc.

Rationibus certe istiusmodi ductos puto, qui primi, jam inde ab ipsis Christianismi primordiis, textum hunc corrumpere, &c. Vid. Millii Edit. & Not. in loc.

But the supposition of another *Cephas*, distinct from the Apostle, of whom there was no mention in the Gospel, nor any authentic account in history, was an argument too precarious to satisfy men of judgement: for which reason we find it disclaimed by some of the primitive Fathers. “ We know no other *Cephas*, says *Jerom*, “ but him, who, in the Gospel and the Epistles, “ is sometimes called *Cephas* and sometimes “ *Peter*: both which names, the one *Greek*, the “ other *Hebrew* or *Syriac*, are of the same im- “ port. And if on the account of *Porphyry*’s “ blasphemy, and lest *Peter* should be thought “ to have erred, we must presently feign an- “ other *Cephas*, we shall have work enough upon “ our hands, in expunging numberless places of “ the holy Scriptures, which he finds fault with, “ because he does not understand [1].”

St. Chrysostom shews likewise, from the circumstances of the fact itself, that it must have been the Apostle *Peter*, who was concerned in it; because no other person could have had authority enough, to draw the *Jews* and *Barnabas* also into his party [2]. Let us inquire then what were the sentiments of these Fathers on this story, and in what manner they interpreted it, so as to elude the calumnies of *Porphyry*.

[1] Quibus respondendum; alterius, nescio cujus, *Cephas*, modo *Petrus* scribitur, &c. Hieron. ib. nisi ejus, qui in Evangelio, [2] Homil. Oper. Tom. & in aliis Pauli Epistolis, & iii. p. 363. Edit. Benedict.

Chrysostom,

Chrysostom, who makes it the subject of a Homily, preached by him in that very City, where it was transacted, takes great pains to shew, "that this seeming quarrel between the two Apostles, was wholly feigned and dissembled, and had been concerted beforehand between them with great art and prudence, for the sake of the converted Jews. For *Peter* knowing, that he should give much scandal to those, who came from *Jerusalem*, as being more zealous and stiff in their prejudices than the Provincial Jews, if he should bluntly require them, to quit the whole observance of their ceremonies, and live in common with the Gentiles, chose rather to comply with them for a while, for the sake of insinuating himself the more effectually into their favor and esteem: but that he might draw them and himself too the sooner out of a compliance, which he really condemned, he begged of *Paul*, to expostulate with him for it very sharply in public, that from his silence and patience under such a reproof, the Jews might infer a tacit acknowledgement of his error, and by observing, that he had nothing to say, in defence of their conduct, might be convinced, that it was not right, and so be induced to change it."

This plot then having had its effect in *Antioch*, *St. Paul*, according to *Chrysostom*, applies it here again to the benefit of the *Galatians*, and with the same view, with which he had before

276 REFLECTIONS *on the Dispute between*
been an actor in it, he now gives a relation of it
in writing; “dissembling still the real state of
“it, that the *Galatians* perceiving how severely
“*Peter* himself had been reprov’d, for his com-
“pliance with the ceremonies of the law, might
“be the more confirmed and resolute in the re-
“jection of them [1].”

Jerom’s opinion of this affair is much the same
with *Cbrysoftom’s*; “that this quarrel was but a
“fiction contriv’d privately between the two
“Apostles, for the benefit of their new con-
“verts. *Peter’s* commission was more parti-
“cularly directed to the Jews, *Paul’s* to the
“Gentiles: And though both of them were
“equally concerned and zealous to promote the
“common cause of the Gospel, yet each was
“more specially oblig’d, to secure the salvation
“of those, who were specially committed to his
“care. Wherefore, as there were great jea-
“lousies and contests between the two factions
“of the Jewish and Gentile converts, about the
“observance of the Mosaic rites, so it was con-
“certed by the Apostles, that *Peter*, in order to
“keep the Jews united to himself and to the
“faith of Christ, should outwardly declare him-
“self on their side, and pretend a zeal for their
“principles: and lest the Gentiles on the other
“hand, should be drawn by his authority to
“imitate his conduct, *Paul* was to oppose him
“warmly in public, for the sake of keeping his
“party likewise intire, and preserving his credit

[1] Homil. Oper. Tom. iii. p. 363. Edit. Benedict.

“with

“ with them ; so that, by their mutual diffimu-
 “ lation, both sides might in the end be fav-
 “ ed [1]. This he illustrates by the example of
 “ the Lawyers, who seem often to scold and
 “ quarrel with each other, when they mean no-
 “ thing more, than to deceive the by-standers,
 “ and gain the greater credit with their Clients,
 “ by an affected zeal for the cause, which they
 “ have undertaken to defend [2]. If any one
 “ thinks, says he, that *Paul* did really withstand
 “ *Peter*, and out of zeal for the truth of the Gos-
 “ pel, did boldly insult his superior, he will not
 “ be able to account for *Paul’s* conduct, when
 “ to the Jews he became a Jew, that he might
 “ gain the Jews ; who must be condemned of
 “ the same hypocrisy, when he shaved his head
 “ at *Cenchrea*, and paid his vow on that occasion
 “ in the Temple, and circumcised *Timothy*, the
 “ Son of a Gentile, &c.—and with what face
 “ could he have the assurance, to condemn
 “ that in *Peter*, the Apostle of the Jews, which
 “ he himself was guilty of, though the Apostle
 “ of the Gentiles [3]?” Such were the senti-

[1] Sed, ut ante diximus, restitit secundum faciem publicam Petro: ut hypocrisis observandæ legis, quæ nocebat eis, qui ex Gentibus crediderant, correptionis hypocrisi emendaretur, & uterque populus salvus fieret, &c.—Unde & Paulus eadem arte, qua ille simulabat, ei

restitit in faciem, &c. Hieron. Comm. in loc.

[2] Ut omiſſis sæpe negotiis, in proprias contumelias verterentur, & joculari se invicem dente morderent, &c. Ibid.

[3] Si putat aliquis vere Paulum Petro restituisse, & pro veritate Evangelii intre-

278 REFLECTIONS on the Dispute between
ments of *St. Jerom*, which he explains at large
in his commentary on the Epistle to the *Galatians*: but this solution of the matter was
greatly censured by *St. Austin*, and gave occasion
to an Epistolary controversy upon it, between
these two great Doctors of the primitive Church.

St. Austin charges it “ with being nothing else,
“ but a defence of useful and seasonable lying:
“ and insists, that if *Paul* knew *Peter* to be in-
“ nocent, at the same time when he declared
“ him to be blameable, and not to act accord-
“ ing to the truth of the Gospel, it was in rea-
“ lity a lie: which it is impious to charge upon
“ an Apostle; and especially in an Epistle,
“ where he calls God to witness, that he does
“ not lie. He shews also the pernicious con-
“ sequence of such a doctrine, and that it would
“ destroy the authority of the Scripture itself,
“ by making it impossible to distinguish, be-
“ tween its real and dissembled meaning: for
“ the prevention of which evil, he exhorts
“ *Jerom* to a recantation. As for his own part,
“ he allows *Peter* to have been blameable, yet
“ not for continuing with his countrymen, to
“ observe the traditions of their Ancestors;
“ which he might have done both innocently

pide injuriam fecisse Prz-
cessori; non ei stabit illud,
quod & ipse Paulus, Judæis
Judæus factus est, ut Judæos
lucrifaceret, & ejusdem si-
mulationis tenebitur reus,
&c.—qua auctoritate, qua

fronte audet hoc in Petro re-
prehendere, qui Circumcisi-
onis Apostolus erat, quod
ipse, Apostolus Gentium, as-
guitur commississe. Hieron.
Comm. in Iec.

“ and

“and consistently, but for obliging the Gentiles to observe them also in the same manner [1].”

Jerom, on the contrary, persisted in his opinion, which he confirmed by many arguments, as well as the testimonies of all the best Interpreters before him; “challenging *Austin*, to produce any one good author of a contrary sentiment; and declaring, that it would have been the greatest impudence and audaciousness in *Paul*, to reprove *Peter* so smartly for practices, of which he himself, was more eminently guilty. And as for *Austin’s* opinion, concerning the expediency of observing the rites of the Law, he treats it as a mere Heresy, and the same, for which *Cerintus* and *Ebion* had been condemned by the Church[2].”

[1] Patrocinium mendacii susceptum esse, vel a te tali viro, vel a quopiam, si alius ista scripsit; fateor non mediocriter doleo, &c. Epist. August. ad Hieron. Oper. Hieron. T. iv. par. ii. Ep. lxxv. p. 602.

Arripe, obsecro te, ingenium & vere Christianam severitatem, & *παλιγγενεσιαν*, ut dicitur, cane. Ibid. Ep. lxxvii. p. 606.

Quapropter non ideo Petrum emendavit, quod paternas traditiones observaret, quod si facere vellet nec

mendaciter nec incongrue faceret;—sed quoniam gentes cogebat judaizare, &c. Ibid.

[2] Quum me erroris mei multos socios habere perspexeris, tu veritatis tuæ saltem unum ad stipulatorem adferre debebis—Hæc est summa sententiæ tuæ, ut post Evangelium Christi benefaciant Judæi credentes, si legis mandata custodiant—si hoc verum est, in Cerinthi & Ebionis hæresium delahimur. Ibid. Ep. lxxiv.

But notwithstanding the great authority of these renowned Saints *Chrysostom* and *Jerom*, it is certain, that their interpretation of this story is unnatural and absurd; contrived to support the vulgar hypothesis, *that the Apostles could not err*: which they themselves own to have been the sole end and purpose of it [1]. *Austin* indeed comes nearer to the truth, in allowing *Peter* to have been in a fault: yet lest the same should be retorted also on *Paul*, with the addition of rashness and inconstancy, for condemning in his his Fellow-Apostle, what he himself practised afterwards, he has hit upon an expedient, which lessens the crime of the one, and clears the other from any share of it, by alledging; that *Peter's* fault did not lie in his compliance with the Jewish rites, but in imposing the same also upon the Gentiles [2]. An interpretation, neither agreeable to the particular sense of that Epistle, nor to the general doctrine of the Apostles; which expressly annuls all the ceremonies of the Law, not onely as uselefs, but as noxious to all Christians, whatsoever, as well of Jewish, as Gentile extraction; and which *Jerom* therefore treats, as nothing better than Heresy.

The modern Commentators, who for the most part do little more than copy the Antients,

[1] Quod si cui iste non placet sensus, quo nec Petrus peccasse, nec Paulus procaciter arguisse majorem ostenditur. Hieron. in Gal. ii. It. Chrysost. T. iii. p. 363.

Edit. Bened.

[2] Non quia servabat consuetudinem Judæorum, sed quia Gentibus eam volebat imponere. Aug. Exposit. in Gal. ii. 11.

range

range themselves here generally on the one side and the other, under *Jerom* and *Austin*. Some indeed take no notice at all of this passage; either finding nothing to say upon it, that pleased them, or fearing perhaps to give offence, by saying what they found to be true. *Erasmus* observes, that it is a very difficult place, and had puzzled the most learned of the Greeks, how to explicate it: and as he thought fit on this occasion to adhere to the common hypothesis, *that the Apostles, after they had once received the Holy Ghost could not err in points of doctrine*; so he follows the explication of *Chrysostom*, and improves still upon it, by straining the words of the text, as some other Critics have also done, so as to make them signify even to *the Galatians*, that the dispute was wholly feigned and concerted between the two Apostles. For the words, which we rightly translate; *I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed*; they interpret thus; *I withstood him seemingly, or in outward appearance, because he was blamed by some, who did not understand the reason of his conduct* [1]. But they do not reflect, that this forced interpretation is contrary to the whole argument of this Epistle, the purpose of which is, to move the *Galatians* by his own example,

[1] Certe locus est obscurus, qui doctissimos Græciæ magnopere torserit.— Sed Apostolos, post acceptum Spiritum Sanctum, errasse in dogmatibus fidei, mihi videtur dictu impium, &c. *Erasm.* in *Galat.* ii. 11. 14. vid. it. *Clarium.* ib. ver. 11.

to

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to stand firm in their Christian liberty, against
those false teachers, who were attempting to im-
pose the *Yoke of Moses* upon them. If in this place
therefore, as these interpreters contend, he meant
to signify, that, when he withstood *Peter* so
warmly, he was acting onely a feigned part, that
would destroy the force of his own reasoning.

Grotius, though generally speaking the most
rational of the Commentators, yet in this pas-
sage, seems to have been affected with the popu-
lar prejudice, or unwilling at least, out of regard
to it, to declare his own sentiments with free-
dom. For by mitigating the fault of *Peter*,
and softening the harshness of *Paul's* censure
upon him, he labors to dress up the whole, into
the case onely of an amicable debate, or friendly
expostulation, about a thing in itself indifferent;
which, to say nothing of the rest, the fourteenth
verse will by no means bear [1].

On the whole, we may observe; how impos-
sible it is for men even of the greatest learning
and piety, to interpret Scripture with success,
when they come to it prepossessed with systems,
which they are listed as it were to defend, as ne-
cessary parts of the Christian religion; for in-
stead of searching candidly for the true meaning
of the text, they come provided with senses,
which they are obliged to ingraft upon it; till
by a practice and habit of wresting the Scripture

[1] *Asiſer*, hic intelligendum verbis amicis, &c. Grot.
ib. ver. 11.

on all occasions, they acquire a dexterity of extracting what doctrines they please out of it.

The case now before us affords a remarkable instance of it. There is not a fact in all the Scriptures, more clearly, expressly, and intelligibly delivered than this, into which we are inquiring: and if it were found in any other book but the Bible, or told of any other persons, but the Apostles, it would be understood at once, without the possibility of a mistake, by all, even of the lowest capacity. Yet this plain story, related in a book, which above all others, is calculated for the universal instruction and benefit of mankind, has puzzled both the Greeks and the Latins of all ages, and been strained and tortured by the ablest Doctors of the Church, for the sake of squeezing out of it every possible sense, but the true one. For which no other cause can be assigned but this; that in the degeneracy of the Primitive Church, when by the policy or superstition of its leaders, new rites and doctrines were introduced, which the text of Scripture disclaimed; then reason and sense were of course discarded, and no rule of interpreting admitted, but what tallied with the fashionable systems, and served the views of those, who introduced them.

I shall procede therefore, without any farther regard to the prejudices and interpretations either of the antients or moderns, to set forth the real state of this fact, as it is declared by *St. Paul*, and illustrated

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illustrated by other passages of the New Testa-
ment.

It is manifest then in the first place, that *Peter*, ^{1st} though more particularly the Apostle of the Jews, was clearly convinced, that the Ceremonies of the Law were superseded and abolished by the Dispensation of the Gospel. For on all occasions, we find him strongly asserting this doctrine, and declaring, that *the Yoke of Moses* ought not to be imposed on the necks of Christians: yet with all this conviction, it is equally manifest, that through fear of the Jews, he was induced, as we have seen above, to change his conduct, dissemble his opinion, and join himself to those Zealots of the Law, who required the observance of its rites, as necessary still to all [1].

Paul, on the other hand, the Apostle of the Gentiles, and, by that character, the more engaged to vindicate their liberty, knowing *Peter's* sentiments on this question to be really the same with his own, was so scandalised at his dissimulation, that he could not abstain from reproaching him very severely for it in public: yet when it came afterwards to his own turn, to be alarmed with an apprehension of danger from the

[1] See Cave's Life of St. Peter, § viii. c. 7. it. Archbishop Wake on the Epist. of Barnabas, c. x, xi. p. 65.

Timens ergo eos segrega-

bat se a gentibus, & simu- late illis consentiebat, ad imponenda Gentibus illa onera servitutis. August. in Galat. ii. 11.

same

same quarter, he was content to comply and dissemble too, and in order to pacify the Jews, affected a zeal for their legal rites and observances, by the advice of *James*, who then presided in the Church of *Jerusalem* [1]. *Paul*, says *Chrysostom*, was various both in his words and actions; at one time he complied with the ceremonies of the Law; at another he contemned them: at one time he sacrificed and shaved his head; at another he denounced anathema's against all, who did so: at one time he circumcised, at another rejected all circumcision [2].

We may observe, however, by the way, that the conduct of *Paul* was not so guarded and cautious as that of *Peter*, who seems to have better understood the true Spirit of his Countrymen, and to what extravagance their enthusiastic zeal would carry them, if provoked and pushed to extremity: he recollected that they had stoned *Stephen*, for declaring, that *Jesus* came to change those customs, which *Moses* had established, and he took care therefore, to give way to them in time, when his compliance was likely to prevent the danger, which he apprehended: whereas *Paul* had carried his zeal for Christian liberty so far, and declared himself every where so roundly against the ceremonies of the law, both by preaching and writing, that when he was driven afterwards to a change of conduct, his dissimulation proved too late, and instead of pacifying

[1] Acts xxi. 18. [2] Chrysost. Oper. T. ii. Homil. de laudib. Pauli, p. 502. Edit. Benedict.

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the Jews, provoked them only the more; so
that they laid violent hands upon him in the
Temple, and would certainly have destroyed
him, if the Chief Captain had not come to his
rescue with a band of soldiers [1].

This is the true state, of the case, as it may
clearly be collected from several passages of the
New Testament: and whatever use the enemies
of religion can make of it, they must enjoy it,
since Christianity cannot be defended, either by
denying or concealing the truth. Let the dis-
ciples then of *Porphyry*, after the example of
their master, object to us if they please, that these
two Apostles, of whose extraordinary gifts and
miracles we read so much, were left on many
occasions, like all other frail and fallible men, to
govern themselves by rules and maxims merely
human, and were betrayed sometimes by their
passions, into compliances, dishonorable to their
character: for should we grant them all this, it
cannot be of any hurt or discredit to Christi-
anity, unless they could shew it to be one of its
doctrines, that persons extraordinarily illumi-
nated and inspired on certain occasions, did on
all occasions cease to be men: which will not
be pretended in a religion, whose sacred monu-
ments, both of the Old and New Testament,
furnish many instances of the sins and frailties of
those, who are there celebrated, as the principal
favorites of heaven.

[1] Acts xxi. 31.

It may be objected still farther, that, whatever notions we may entertain concerning the inspiration of the sacred writers, it is evident from this very case, that the Apostles and first Preachers were not constantly inspired by the Holy Ghost, even in the execution of their ministry, and the propagation of the Gospel, in one of the principal Cities of the East: and this too must necessarily be granted, since it is demonstrably proved by the fact, into which we are inquiring: for if *Peter's* conduct was really blameable, we must necessarily allow, that he was not at that time under the guidance of an unerring Spirit; or, if it was not blameable, then *Paul's* censure of him was rash and unjust, and could not be suggested by the same Spirit.

The same conclusion may be drawn from many other passages of the New Testament; from *Paul's* behaviour before the High Priest, where he was guilty of a rudeness and indecency, which he himself condemns [1]: from his sharp contention with *Barnabas*, who had been joined in commission with him by the Holy Ghost, and was extraordinarily inspired by the same Spirit: *which could not have happened, says Erasmus, without some fault, on the one side or the other.* Their quarrel was about *Mark*, supposed to be the same, who wrote the Gospel; whom *Paul* looked upon as a desertor, and would not keep company with any longer; but *Barnabas* had a different opinion of him, and chose him

[1] Acts xxiii. 5.

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 for his associate ; upon which they parted in anger from each other [1]. *Paul* on this occasion *was more severe, says Jerom, Barnabas more mild; both of them abound in their own sense; yet the quarrel has something in it of human frailty* [2].

It appears also, from the account of these disputes in the Church of *Antioch*, that these same Apostles, who planted Christianity in that City, had never made any pretension to an infallible Spirit, nor their converts, who paid the utmost reverence to their persons, had ever entertained a thought of ascribing it to them. For we find, that *Paul* and *Barnabas* had not authority enough with them, to put an end to their contentions about the exercise of the Jewish ceremonies, till they were sent on a formal embassy to *Jerusalem*, to receive the judgement of the whole assembly of the Apostles and Elders residing there, on the subject of their disputes.

As it is certain then, from many testimonies of the New Testament, that the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel were indued occasionally with extraordinary powers and supernatural assistances by the Holy Ghost ; so it is as certain, from other testimonies, that they were not perpetually assisted in the same extraordinary manner, but frequently left, like common men,

[1] Acts xv. 12, 39. Quod fieri non potuit nisi alterutro errante. Erasmi. in loc. it. in Matt. ii. 6.

[2] Paulus severior, ille

clementior: uterque in suo sensu abundat: tamen dissensio habet aliquid humanæ fragilitatis. Hieron. Oper. T. iv. p. ii. p. 522.

to

to regulate their conduct by their own natural prudence [1].

[1] The case appears to have been the same also under the Jewish Dispensation; that the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, did not perpetually reside in those, to whom they had once been communicated. For example; *Samuel*, when he was sent to anoint a King over *Israel*, out of the family of *Jesse*, did not know the particular person, to whom his commission was addressed, but, upon the sight of *Jesse's* sons, as they were produced before him, did, what all other men would naturally do; gave the preference in his own mind to him, who, by the superior comeliness of his person, seemed the best qualified to sustain the Regal dignity; till he was convinced of his mistake by a special revelation, and directed to *David*, whom God had destined to that honor. [1 Sam. xvi. 6.]

Thus also, when *David* had taken a resolution, to build a Temple to the Lord, the Prophet *Nathan*, whom he consulted upon it, approved the project without any hesitation, and en-

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couraged him to execute it. But in that same night, he was ordered by a special revelation from God, to go back to the King, with a command to him, to desist from his design. [2 Sam. vii. 3. 1 Chron. xxii. 8.]

Thus again, when the *Shunamite* woman addressed herself, in a passionate manner, to *Elisba*, upon the death of her Son, the Prophet surprised at her distress, declares, *that God had hidden the matter from him*, and seems anxious, to know the cause of her great affliction. [2 Kings iv. 27.] Lastly, from the transaction between the *two Prophets*, at *Bethel*, it is evident, first, that their divine Inspiration or Commission was limited to particular purposes, beyond which it had no effect: 2dly, That Prophets, though inspired and employed by God on some occasions, yet on others, might be guilty not onely of weak but bad actions. [1 Kings xiii.] agreeably to which facts, *Grotius* observes, that the Prophetic Spirit was but seldom resident in the Prophets, just as

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We

We read sometimes, how the Prophets also of the Old Testament, as well as the Preachers of the New, were indued with a miraculous vigor of body, far above the force of nature ; so as to perform great journeys without fatigue, great fastings without hunger, and support life without the supply of its ordinary food ; yet at other times, the same men were subject to all the common wants and infirmities of nature ; to hunger and thirst ; to pain and sickness ; to age and decay. The case was the same with the faculties of their minds ; whenever God thought fit to make use of their ministry, for the extraordinary purposes of his Providence, he enlarged and enlightened their understandings, and inspired them with a knowledge, incapable of error : yet at other times, left them wholly destitute of any supernatural assistance, and liable to all the effects of their natural passions. It is as extravagant therefore, and contradictory to the testimony of Scripture, to believe the prophets and Apostles to have been at all times incapable of error, because they were sometimes guided by an unerring Spirit ; as to imagine, that they were always exempted from fatigue, or hunger,

God thought fit ; nor were the Prophets certain, at what time they were to have it : of which we see instances, in *Nathan, Samuel, Isaiab.* [Aas ii. 3.] Dr. *Lightfoot* also says, that though their power was great, they could neither do nor tell all things, nor act on all occasions, but always had their bounds, and sometimes a recess of the Spirit, or a departure of it from them,

because

because the effect of those sensations was sometimes miraculously suspended in them.

Erasmus, though in some places he seems disposed to support the vulgar hypothesis, *that the Apostles could not err*; and, like all other Commentators, endeavours, by forced constructions, to adapt the sense of Scripture to that system; yet, in other places, where, like a true Critic, he delivers his sentiments with freedom, he expressly asserts, what I have here advanced; that the Apostles, on ordinary occasions, were not different from ordinary men, but subject to ignorance and error; and from the case of this very dissension between *Paul* and *Peter*, shews, *that they were capable of erring, even after they had received the Holy Ghost* [1]. The learned Mr. *Dodwell* also declares, “that neither the Apostles, nor the Prophets even of the first order, were perpetually inspired, or had the miraculous gifts of God at their command; and that all things therefore, which they have signified to us by their words or deeds, are not to be considered as divine Oracles [2]. There never was a Prophet, says he, except Christ, who, in all his actions, was directed by a pro-

[1] *Erasmi*. in Act. x. 38. Etiam post acceptum Spiritum Sanctum, objurgatur ac docetur Petrus a Paulo: Paulus a Barnaba dissentit usque ad divortium.

ordinis Prophetis fuisse ad nutum aut pro arbitrio suo, divini Numinis afflatus; nec adeo omnia, quæcunque dictis significarunt aut factis, ea pro divinis oraculis habendâ.

[2] Dixeram—ne quidem Apostolis, aut summi

Præf. in Diss. Iren. § ii.

“ phetic Spirit; nor ever any, who was not li-
 “ able to human errors, where he was guided
 “ only by his own human Spirit. *Barnabas* er-
 “ red, *St. Peter* also erred, and *St. Paul*, an
 “ Apostle not inferior to him, affirms him to
 “ have erred, though they were indued with the
 “ Apostolic, or the very highest degree of the
 “ extraordinary gifts [1].”

Some zealots indeed, on the other hand, con-
 tend; that to give up the perpetual inspiration
 of the sacred writers, is to betray the cause of
 Christianity, and to give up the authority of the
 Scriptures themselves; and that there is a ne-
 cessity to admit or reject the whole, as divinely
 inspired; since partial inspiration will be found
 equivalent in the end to no inspiration at all.
 And this indeed is the general doctrine of those,
 who assume to themselves the title of orthodox:
 but it is so far from being of service to Christi-
 anity, that it has always been, and ever will be,
 a clog and incumbrance to it, with all rational
 and thinking men: (and to impose it, as neces-
 sary to the Creed of a Christian, and on the au-
 thority of those sacred books, in which every

[1] Nullus, excepto Do-
 mino, fuit unquam Propheta,
 qui omnia egerit Spiritu pro-
 phetico. Nullus, qui in iis,
 quæ suo gesserit humano
 spiritu, non fuerit etiam er-
 roribus obnoxius humanis.
 Erravit Barnabas: Erravit

etiam S. Petrus, eumque er-
 rasse confirmat, non minor
 Apostolus, S. Paulus, supre-
 mo licet extraordinariorum
 donorum gradu Apostolico
 præditi. Diff. Iren. ii. § iii.
 p. 95.

one

one may see the apparent marks of human frailty, not onely in the style and language, but sometimes also in the matter of them, can have no other effect, but of reducing us to the dilemma of distrusting either those books, or our senses.)

But this notion is not onely inconsistent with the facts abovementioned, but contradictory even to those very writers, to whom it is ascribed: for it is certain, that the Evangelists make not the least pretension to it, and the Apostles on some occasions expressly disclaim it [1]. *St. Paul*, in this same Epistle to the *Galatians*, says, *I speak after the manner of men*. On which *St. Jerom* observes, “that he makes “good what he says, and by his low and vulgar way of reasoning, might have given offence to understanding men, if he had not prefaced it, as he does, by signifying, that he “he was delivering onely his own human sentiments [2].”

And as this Apostle was sometimes destitute of the divine assistance, in the explication of particular doctrines, so it is as evident also, that,

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 12, 25. 2 Cor. xi. 17. Rom. iii. 5. vi. 19.

[2] Gal. iii. 15. Unde manifestum est, id fecisse Apostolum, quod promisit; nec reconditis ad Galatas

usum esse sensibus, sed quotidianis & vilibus, & quæ possent, nisi præmisset secundum hominem dico, prudentibus displicere. Hieron. Comment. in loc. Oper. T. iv. p. 261.

on other occasions, he was deprived of the power of working miracles.

The Apostles, says *Erasmus*, did not *always raise the dead*; did not *always cure the sick*; but then onely, when the cause of religion and of the Gospel required it [1]. *St. Paul* acquaints *Timothy*, that he had left *Trophimus* behind him sick, on his journey towards *Rome*; at a time when he most wanted the comfort and assistance of his friends; being deserted, as he complains, by some of them, and forced to send others to the work of the ministry: and it cannot be supposed, that in such a distress, and want of attendants, he would have left his disciple and companion in that sick state, if he had been induced at that time, as we find him to have been at others, with a miraculous power of healing diseases [2]. In short, this notion of the universal inspiration of the Apostles and sacred Writers, appears to have no other foundation,

[1] Non semper excitabant mortuos, non semper sanabant ægrotos, sed tum demum, cum ad religionis & Evangelii negotium pertinebat. *Erasm.* in *Act.* x. 38.

[2] 2 *Tim.* iv. 20. *Ephroditus* also, whom *St. Paul* calls his brother and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier, is said to have been dangerously sick, and nigh unto death, to the great grief

of the Apostle and of the Philippians also, to whom he sent him with his Epistle, soon after his recovery. [*Philip.* ii. 25.] And in the case likewise of *Timothy*, instead of confirming his health by his miraculous power over all diseases, we find *Paul* advising him onely, to drink a little wine, instead of water, for the sake of his stomach and frequent infirmities, 1 *Tim.* v. 23.

but

but in the mistaken sense of certain texts, suggested by the prejudices of pious men, who greedily embrace an hypothesis, which seems to advance the honor of religion, and furnishes, at the same time, the shortest and easiest method of silencing all objections to it, by the infallible authority of persons inspired by God. But this same question will be more clearly and largely illustrated in my next inquiry.

R E F L E C T I O N S

O N T H E

Variations, or Inconsistencies,

Which are found among the

FOUR EVANGELISTS

In their different Accounts of the same Facts.

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REFLECTIONS, *etc.*

THE harmony or agreement which is found in the four Gospels, with regard to the principal transactions there recorded, though written by different persons, at different times, and in different places, is justly celebrated by the Christian writers, as a strong proof of the integrity of the Evangelists, and of the certainty of the facts, which they deliver; and consequently, of the truth of Christianity itself.

Its adversaries on the other hand, sensible of the force of this reasoning, have been endeavouring in all ages to shake this foundation, by affirming, that there *is no such harmony among the Gospels*, as is pretended, but on the contrary, *such inconsistencies and contradictions, as are sufficient to blast their authority* [1]. But the little success which they have met with in their attempts of this kind, shews, what little weight their objections are thought to have, by the serious and thinking part of mankind.

The Champions however of the Gospel, not content with simple victory, nor satisfied with

[1] Quidam vel impia vanitate, vel imperita temeritate calumniis appetunt, ut eis veracis narrationis derogent fidem—hoc enim solent quasi palmare vanitatis suæ objicere, quod ipsi Evangelistæ inter seipso dissidentiant. — August. de Consen. Evangelist. l. i. § 10.

refuting

refuting the cavils of its enemies, resolved to carry their triumphs still further, and to cut off even the possibility of cavilling for the future, by maintaining, that the Evangelists were not only consistent in their accounts of all the greater events, but could not possibly contradict each other, even in the smallest, being all of them perpetually inspired by a divine and unerring Spirit.

This opinion obtained in the early ages of the Church, and is asserted by several of the primitive Fathers [1]: in consequence of which, many books have been written, to demonstrate the real harmony of the Gospels, in those very passages, in which they have generally been thought to contradict or dissent from each other.

My present purpose therefore is, to inquire into the state of this question: and to collect, as far as I am able, what it is that a Christian is bound to believe, on the one side or the other, from the evidence of plain facts, as they are found in the Evangelists themselves: which I shall endeavour to explain, without prejudice or partiality, or any other view, than to disco-

[1] Solis eis Scripturarum libris, qui jam Canonici appellantur, didici hunc timorem honoremque deferre, ut nullum eorum auctorem scribendo aliquid errasse firmissime credam.—Non te arbitrator, sic legi tuos libros velle,

tanquam Prophetarum & Apostolorum: de quorum scriptis, quod omni errore caret, ant, dubitare nefarium est. Id. Epist. ad Hieron. in Oper. Hieron. T. iv. par. ii. p. 630. Edit. Benedict.

ver.

ver and declare what is true, and by that means to promote the real interest and honour of religion.

The first objection then, which we meet with to the veracity of the Evangelists, even in the primitive ages, is drawn from the two different *genealogies* of our Saviour's family, as they are severally given by St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke* : which are charged with many inconsistencies, not onely, when compared with each other, but when considered separately and by themselves.

For instance ; it is allowed by all the Commentators, both ancient and modern, that in the second of those Tesseradecades, or periods of fourteen generations, into which *Matthew* has distributed the whole Genealogy, he has either wilfully suppressed, or negligently omitted, three successive descents from father to son, between *Joram* and *Ozias* ; viz. *Ochozias*, *Josab*, *Abaziah* [1] ; in contradiction to the truth of history, and to those very books whence he drew the Genealogy itself [2]. *Jerom*, *Hilary*, and other ancient Fathers, give this reason for the omission ; that because *Joram* had allied himself to the house of *Abab*, by taking thence his wife *Atbalia*, a second *Jesabel*, *Matthew* did not think his wicked issue, from so wicked a wife,

[1] Cernis ergo, quod secundum fidem historię tres Reges in medio fuerint, quos hic Evangelista prętermisit.

Hier. in Matt. i. Op. T. iv. p. 6.

[2] 4 Reg. iii. 8.

worthy

worthy to stand in the pedigree of the *Holy Jesus*, even to the third generation [1].

But this solution is thought ridiculous by some of the best Expositors : for if those three persons had been thrown out of the Genealogy, on the account of their wickedness, the same reason would have excluded several others, as *Achas, Manasses, &c.* “ Let the reader consider, says *Erasmus*, how it can be consistent in “ the Evangelist, to scruple the admission of “ any for their impiety, when he had given a “ place to *Ruth*, and to the wife of *Uriah*, and to “ *Rahab*, women famous for their lewdness [2].” And *Jerom* himself, though he assigns the impiety of the three Kings, as the reason of their exclusion, yet observes, “ as a thing to be noted, that no women are numbered in the Genealogy, but such, as are mentioned in the “ Scriptures with some blot upon their characters, that he who came for the sake of Sinners, and was himself descended from Sinners, “ might wipe out the sins of all [3].” Where-

[1] Sed in hoc non mendacii aut negligentiae vitium : tres ratione sunt praeteriti, &c. Hilar. in Matt. i.

Verum quia Joram generi se miscuerat impiissimae Jezabel, idcirco usque ad tertiam generationem memoria ejus tollitur, ne in sanctae natiuitatis ordine poneretur. Hieron. ibid.

[2] Illud expendat diligens lector, qui conveniat hic Evangelistam offensum fuisse quorundam impietate, cum ante *Ruth* posuerit, & uxorem *Uriae* & *Rahab*, scelere nobiles foeminas. In Matt. i. 17.

[3] Notandum est genealogia Salvatoris, nullam sanctarum assumi mulierum, sed eas, quas Scriptura reprehendit

fore

fore it is the opinion of *Grotius*, which is intimated likewise by *Jerom*, that *Matthew's* sole view, in omitting those three persons, was to reduce this division of the Genealogy to the number of fourteen; with which he has resolved to fill up each of the three periods into which he divided it [1].

It is observed however, at the same time, that in his third *Tesseradecade*, or division of the Pedigree, the number of *fourteen* cannot be made out; since all, who are there enumerated, make up *thirteen* onely, including *Jesus* himself. To supply this deficiency, *Theophylact* says, "that the Babylonish captivity, with which this third period begins, must be numbered in the place of a person." But *Austin* tells us, "that *Jecbonias*, who stands the last in the second division, must be counted over again at the head of the third; being, in that great revolution of the Jewish affairs, like a corner-stone, which has two different aspects, and belongs to two sides of the building: from which he collects a mystical sense, alluding to the person of Christ [2]." But

dit: ut qui propter peccatores venerat, de peccatoribus nascens, omnium peccata deleret. Hieron. in Matt. i.

[1] Quod autem personas quasdam omiserit Matthæus, factum est rotundandi numeri causa. Grot. in Matt. i. 17. it. Zeger.

Verum quia Evangelistæ propositum erat, tres Tesseradecadas, in diverso temporum statu ponere, idcirco, &c. Hier. ib.

[2] Φασὶ τινὲς, ὅτι καὶ τὴν μετοικεσίαν, ὡς προσώπων τὰ ἐν ἔχουσάν ἱθὺς. Theophyl. in Matt. i.

Jerom

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Jerom more critically and reasonably supposes, “ that there stood originally in the pedigree, “ *two Jechonias’s*; the Father and the Son : the “ one in the end of the second division ; the “ other in the beginning of the third : and that “ this identity of name, in two persons immediately following each other, gave occasion “ to the omission of one of them, through the “ inadvertency of the Transcribers, in the first “ ages of the Church : whence the same omission was propagated into all the later Copies [1].

It is observed likewise of this *Jechonias*, who is here said to have begotten *Salatbiel*, that he really died childless ; without any Successor of his own blood, agreeably to what *Jeremiab* had prophesied concerning him [2]. So that if this *Salatbiel*, said to have been begotten of him, be the same, as some think, whom *Luke* calls the *Son of Neri* ; then *Jesus’s* descent from *David* was not, as *Matthew* deduces it, through *Solomon*, but through *Natban* and his posterity, as *Luke* derives it [3].

Various conjectures are made by the learned, concerning the reasons which induced *Matthew* to divide the Genealogy into three equal periods

Illud quod in angulo est
bis numeratur, in fine scilicet
prioris ordinis, & in capite
ejus deflexionis, &c. Aug.
de Consen. Evangel. l. ii. §.

[1] Hieron. ibid.

[2] Hiremiah, xxii. 30.
Lightfoot, in Matt. i. 12.

[3] Grot. in Luc. iii. 27.
Lightfoot, ibid.

10.

of

of fourteen generations ; some of them of a deep and mystical sense ; but the most probable is, what *Grotius* has assigned, “ that it was for the “ sake of assisting the memory ; with which “ view, he first divided the whole into three “ periods, distinguished by as many remarkable “ Epochas ; the first including the time before “ the Monarchy ; the second, the flourishing “ state of it ; the third, its declension : and then “ to each period he assigned an equal number of “ names, as those do, who artificially help the “ memory by the means of images, disposed “ in certain places : to effect all which, he made “ no scruple to leave out of the pedigree some “ persons of inferior note and merit [1].”

Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us, “ that, in *Matthew's* “ division of the Genealogy, though the facts “ and numbers do not exactly agree with the “ truth, yet the Jews cannot find fault with “ him, because it was a common rule and practice with them, to reduce both things and “ numbers, which came near to each other, to “ one and the same denomination ; of which “ he gives several examples [2].” It is not improbable therefore, that *Matthew*, being a Jew, and writing to the Jews, might use that loose and inaccurate method of computing, which was generally practised in those days by the learned of that nation.

[1] Quod ut consequeretur, parvi duxit personas quasdam minime nobiles transilire. Grot. in Matt. i. 17. [2] Hor. Hebraic. in Matt. i. 17.

As to the Genealogy given by *Luke*, there is a wonderful confusion in it, as *Erasmus* says, with regard to the names of persons; which in some copies are too few, in others too many, and in all greatly depraved and inverted. And as in *Matthew's* Genealogy, several names are omitted, and the true pedigree left incomplete; so in *Luke's*, many are supposed to have been added by Transcribers, to make it agree with certain traditions entertained about it: of which sort, as *Grotius* endeavours to shew, are the names of *Matthat*, *Levi*, and *Cainan* [1]: so that if the names omitted by *Matthew* were inserted, and those, which have been added to *Luke*, were thrown out, it seems to be his opinion, as it was also of *Erasmus*, that the numbers in both the Genealogies might be brought to agree very nearly with each other [2].

But if from considering these Genealogies separately, we proceed to compare them with each other, we shall find them clogged with difficulties, which no Expositors, either ancient or modern, have been able to solve. For though both of them deduce the family of *Jesus* in a direct line from *David*, yet this line is filled up by a succession of different persons in each; so

[1] In recensendis nominibus mira confusio.—*Eras.* in *Luc.* iii. 23.

Ad eum vero numerum res reduci non potest nisi & *Matthat*, & *Levi*, hoc loco omit-

tantur, ut & infra *Cainan*. *Grot.* in *Euc.* ibid.

[2] Quos si ceteris adjece-
ris, comperies & numerum
consentire. *Eras.* ibid.

that

that through the whole descent we find but two names the same in the two pedigrees ; and tho' in *Matthew's* deduction of it, the period from *David* to *Jesus* contains but *twenty eight* generations, in *Luke's* it contains *forty one*.

I have already intimated, how some have accounted for the different number of names in each pedigree : but that solution will not answer the purpose, or bring them near to a parity, because all which appear to have been omitted by *Matthew*, are but *four*, and all which are supposed to have been added to *Luke*, but *three*. As to the difference of the persons themselves, some Commentators labor to shew, that the same persons are really enumerated by both the Evangelists, though under different names ; it being the custom of the Jews for each man to have several : but since all the names are exactly the same in them both, from *Abraham* to *David*, yet differ almost totally from *David* to *Jesus*, this account of the matter, as *Grotius* rightly observes, cannot be thought reasonable by men of judgement ; nor so wide a difference ascribed to the accidental effect of such a custom [1].

Another expedient therefore has been invented, and espoused by some Critics of great name [2] ; viz. that *Matthew* gives us the pe-

[1] Ex sola τῆς πολυνομίας
causa accidisse, non facile
concedet, qui judicio valet.
Grot. in Luc. iii. 23.

[2] Erasmus, Drusius, Toi-
nard, Spanheim, Vossius, Jan-
senius, Chemnitius, Light-
foot, &c.

degree of *Joseph*, the reputed Father, and *Luke*, of *Mary* the Mother of *Jesus*: and though *Joseph* be called by *Luke* the Son of *Heli*, he must be understood to mean the Son-in-law, as being the husband of his daughter *Mary*. But this opinion, tho' approved by many of the learned, is justly rejected by others, as being wholly grounded on an hypothesis, without any solid reason to support it [1]: for *Luke*, without any mention of *Mary*, proceeds directly and expressly to set forth the genealogy of *Joseph*: "nor was
" it ever customary or known among the Jews,
" to deduce the descent of families through the
" female line [2]."

It is objected likewise, that though both the Evangelists profess to set forth the true family and pedigree of *Jesus*, yet neither of them have really exhibited it, but have given us only the descent of *Joseph*, his reputed Father, of whose blood he had no share or participation. To this it is answered, "that the family of *Mary*
" the real mother of *Jesus*, is included and re-
" presented in that of her husband; because
" every man was obliged by the law of *Moses*,
" to take his wife out of his own tribe [3]."

[1] Quod quidam existimant, a Matthæo recenseri genus Josephi, a Luca autem Mariæ, nequaquam mihi probabile videtur. Grot in Matth. i. 16.

Theophyl. in Matt. i. it. Chrysost. Hom. ii.

Non esse consuetudinis Scripturarum, ut mulierum in generationibus ordo texatur. Hier. in Matt. i.

[2] — οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ὡς ἐν Ἰσραὴλ ἵνα ἀποδοῖται τὸ γένος διὰ τῆς θύρας.

[3] Nam ita fit, ut in persona Josephi, etiam Mariæ

But

But this likewise does not satisfy ; because the rule of marrying within the same tribe was not constantly observed ; or if it had been so, would not prove *Mary* to have been of the same family ; which is a quite different case [1]. The Commentators, therefore, have been driven to another shift ; to suppose *Mary* to have been an Heiress, and for that reason obliged to marry her nearest of kin [2]. But this is supposed again without any foundation : for it does not appear, that there was any other obligation, even upon Heiresses, than to marry onely within their own tribe : nor is it at all probable, that *Mary* was an Heiress, since all the facts which are delivered of her plainly tend to prove the contrary.

It seems very evident, that the Evangelists had no other notion of our Lord's descent from *David*, than through *Joseph*, whose son he legally was : for whenever they mention *Joseph*, they generally style him the *Son of David*, or of *the house of David* ; yet never ascribe the same character to *Mary* : who, from the silence of the sacred writers, as well as from her relation to *Elizabeth*, of the family of *Aaron* [3], is thought most probably to have been of a different tribe from that of her husband.

genus comprehendatur, &c. Casaub. in Luc. iii. 23.

[1] Quod aiunt tribules
tribulibus nubere debuisse,
neque perpetuum est ; neque
si sit, eo usque valere potest,

ut etiam ex Davidis familia
Mariam fuisse, inde appareat.

Grot. Matt. i. 16.

[2] Numb. xxxvi. 6.

[3] Matt. i. 20. Luc. i.
27. ii. 4. it. i. 5, 36.

U 3

The

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The opinion then which seems to be the most generally received at this day, is, that both the Evangelists exhibit the pedigree of *Joseph* onely, but that *Matthew* gives the succession of his natural, *Luke* of his legal parentage. To illustrate this, they suppose, that *Heli* and *Jacob*, each of whom, in the several Genealogies, is called *the Father of Joseph*, were brothers; not by the same Father, but by the Mother onely; and *Heli*, the elder, being married and dying without issue, *Jacob* took his wife, according to the law, to raise up seed to his brother, and so begat *Joseph*; by nature and blood *the Son of Jacob*; by the law and right of succession, the son also of *Heli*; who descended in a direct line from *Natban*, the son of *David*, as *Jacob* did from *Solomon*. This account is taken from *Eusebius*, who tells us, that *Epiphanius* pretended to have received it from our Saviour's own family [1]. But *Epiphanius*'s authority is much suspected; and the account itself charged with great difficulties, and even absurdities by the Critics [2]: and *Grotius* particularly, though he allows the distinction of the legal and natural descent of *Joseph* to be the most plausible solution of the disagreement of the two Genealogies, yet, contrary to all the other interpreters, he assigns the deduction of the legal stem to

[1] Euseb. Hist. Ecc. 1. i. c. 7.

[2] Sed eum Scriptorem in multis rebus non tam dili-

gentia, quam judicio & linguarum cognitione destitutum, labi, probatu proclive est. Grot. in Luc. iii. 23.

Matthew;

Matthew; and of the natural, to *Luke*: which, though he confirms by many probable, and, as he himself thinks, unanswerable arguments, yet his opinion has had no better fate than the rest above mentioned, of being refuted and rejected in its turn, by all the other Commentators [1].

Upon the whole, since men of the greatest learning and experience in these studies, have not been able to produce any thing satisfactory on the subject of these Genealogies, but have constantly exploded each other's notions, so that what one had established as a foundation, was presently overthrown by another, there seems to be no other part left to us, than, with many of the same Critics, to consider the two pedigrees as inexplicable and irreconcilable, and, according to the advice of *St. Paul*, to give no heed to endless genealogies, which *minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith* [2].

[1] Ego vero non conjecturis, sed liquidis, ni fallor, rationibus adductus certissimum arbitror, a Matthæo spectari juris successionem. Ibid.

[2] Cum hætenus tam multi, & docti, & exercitati viri ita digladiati sint, ut quæ aliustanquam solidissima fundamenta posuerat, alius novis rationibus illa destruat, &c. Vid. Clarium in Matt. i. 1.

Illud interim cavebimus, ne post aliis etiam ex veteri-

bus, qui naufragium non semel hic fecerunt, Genealogiam anxie excutiamus: contenti illo Ambrosii in Lucam, Non licet mihi scire generationis seriem, non licet tamen nescire generationis fidem. Heins. Exercit. Sacr. in Matt. i.

Operam & oleum perdit, qui hic curiose & superstitiose diligens, &c. Scultet. Exercit. Evangel. i. i. 42. See Hammond on Matt. i.,

As to the historical facts, which are recorded in the Gospels, Interpreters have observed likewise a strange disagreement and variation in many of them, as they are severally described by different Evangelists. For example, the story of the woman who anointed our Lord, is thus told by *Matthew* and *Mark*, that *Jesus being at Bethany, in the house of Simon the Leper, there came in a woman, having an Alabaſter box of rich ointment, and poured it on his head, as he ſat at meat.* *St. John*, without any mention of *Simon the Leper*, ſays, that *this paſſed at a Supper made for Jeſus, in Bethany, where Lazarus, whom he had raiſed from the dead, ſat at the table with him, whoſe Siſter Martha waited on them, while his other Siſter Mary took a pound of ointment of Spiſkenard very coſtly, and anointed with it, not the head, but the feet of Jeſus, and wiped them with her hair.* *Matthew* ſays, that *when his Diſciples ſaw it, they had indignation, ſaying; to what purpoſe is this waſte? for this ointment might have been ſold for much and given to the poor.* — *Mark* alſo tells us, that *there were ſome, who had indignation at this waſte, and were very angry with the woman for it.* But *John* ſays, that *it was onely Judas Iſcariot, who grumbled at it—not that he cared for the poor, but becauſe he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein* [1].

[1] Matt. xxvi. 6. Mar. calumniari, quare alius Evan-
xiv. 3. Joh. xii. 1. gelista Judam ſolum dixerit
Scio quosdam hunc locum contriſtatum, & Matthæus

This

This story of the unction of *Jesus*, by a certain woman, who had been a Sinner, as it is related by *Luke* [1], supplies so many fresh difficulties, that the Expositors both ancient and modern have been driven to their usual shift, of supposing these different accounts to relate to different facts, performed at different times, and by different women. *Let no man imagine*, says *Jerom*, *that it was the same woman, who anointed the head, and the feet of Jesus*. Where the Editor of his works admonishes us by a marginal note, that there were *many Mary's, who anointed him* [2]. *Theophylast* supposes, that there were *three*; but *Austin*, that the same thing was performed *twice by the same woman* [3]. Yet all these varying accounts agree so remarkably with each other in every principal circumstance, that it is absurd and irrational, to feign several distinct stories, to serve the prejudices onely of those, who think it impious, to allow the possibility of an error or mistake in the Evangelists. For *Luke* affirms, with *John*, that this passed at an entertainment made for *Jesus*; and with the other Two, in the house of a person called Si-

scribat omnes Apostolos contristatos; nescientes tropum, qui dicitur σύλληψας, vel Synecdoche — Hier. in Matt. xxvi. Op. T. iv. p. 125.

[1] Luk. vii. 37.

[2] Nemo putet eandem esse quæ unguentum fudit super caput & quæ super pe-

des, &c. Id. ibid.

[3] Τῆς τριῶς λέγουσιν εἶναι, &c. Theophyl. in Matt. xxvi.

Nihil itaque aliud intelligendum, nisi non quidem aliam fuisse mulierem — sed eandem Mariam bis hoc fecisse. — August. de Conf. Evang. l. ii. § 154.

mon;

mon ; and in the words of *Mark*, that the woman brought an *Alabaster box of ointment* ; and again, with, *John*, that she anointed, not the head, but *the feet of Jesus* [1]. But what seems to put the case beyond all doubt, is ; that *John*, speaking in another place of this *Mary*, the sister of *Lazarus*, before his mention of this fact, says of her, by an anticipation or *prolepsis*, not unusual with the sacred writers, *She who anointed the Lord, with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair* : which designation of her person, by so particular a circumstance would have been impertinent and equivocal, as *Grotius* observes, if there had been more facts of the same kind, and more *Mary's*, who anointed him [2].

There is a great difference also in the time, which is assigned to this unction by the Evangelists, whence the chief argument is drawn for the diversity of the fact : for three of them declare it to have happened a few days before the death of *Jesus* ; whereas *Luke* describes it, as done in the beginning of his ministry, and while *John Baptist* was living. But this will easily be accounted for, by alledging what the most scrupulous of the Commentators allow, that the

[1] Non tantum unam temporibus congruant. Grot. eandemque fuisse mulierem, in Matt. xxvi. 6.

[2] Non poterat autem certa satis nota sumi ex eo, sed & factum idem, cur negetur non video : neque enim temere multiplicandæ historiæ.—Hæ circumstantiæ sunt quæpiùs acciderat, &c. Grot. Ibid.

αυτῆς ὅτι ἡ ἀντιπροσώπων ὡς καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις

Evangelists

Evangelists took no care, nor thought, to dispose their facts in the proper order of time, in which they were transacted, but set them down, just as their memory supplied them; and what they had forgotten in its proper place, related in another, as they happened to recollect it; and that *Luke* in particular was less accurate in this article than any of them, as he compiled his history, not from his own knowledge or experience, but from materials received at second hand from others. Wherefore since in the case of this same story, as it is separately related by three of the *Evangelists*, we confessedly see several variations or seeming inconsistencies; what scruple or danger can there be, in admitting a few more, from the relation of a fourth, who, in his account of facts, which are common to them all, is observed, for the reason just mentioned, to be more confused and inaccurate than any of them [1].

After the story just mentioned, there follows

[1] Nihil certius, quam a Scriptoribus Evangeliorum multa referri, non temporis ordine sed rerum ductu. Grot. in Matt. xxvi. 6.

Matthæus non ordine quo gestum est, sed quo prætermisum recolit, &c. August. de Conf. Evang. l. ii. § 53.

Marcus ea juxta fidem magis gestorum narravit, quam ordinem. Hieron. Prol. in Matt.

None of them agree throughout in observing the order and succession of the actions related, &c. Hammond Prol. in Matt. p. 4.

Luke who wrote his story from collections he had from others, hath not so exactly observed the order, and hath varied from the others in words and circumstances, &c. Ibid.

another

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another in the same chapter, of our Lord's foretelling to his Disciples the treachery of Judas, which is related also variously by the Evangelists. For his Apostles, as they sat at table with him, being grieved to hear him declare, that one of their number should prove so vile a traitor, were very desirous, for their own justification, that the person might be named, and began every one to say, *Lord, is it I?* Whereupon Jesus gave them a sign or token, by which they might distinguish him, saying; *He, who dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.* This account is given by Matthew and Mark; but John gives a very different turn to it: *That Peter beckened to John, who was leaning on Jesus's bosom, to ask, who it should be: and John having put the question, Jesus answered; He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it: and when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas [1].*

The difference is of no consequence, and might safely be imputed to want of accuracy or memory, in recollecting and recording minute circumstances: but such an imputation is generally thought so dishonourable to the Evangelists, that it is pleasant to see, what shifts have been contrived to evade it. We are told then, that this designation of the traitor Judas, by the delivery of a sop to him, was not signified by Jesus in common to all his Apostles, but to John onely in private, then lying upon his bosom; who

[1] Matt. xxvi. 23. Mar. xiv. 20. Joh. xiii. 26.

had

had *whispered the question* to his Master, and was answered also *by a whisper*, which was not explained to the rest; who knew therefore nothing more of the matter, than what is recorded by *Matthew* and *Mark* [1]. So blind is prejudice, that to refute the suspicion of an error or slip of memory in the Evangelists, it does not scruple to charge them with ignorance of the facts, which they had undertaken to transmit to posterity.

Matthew relates, that *two Dæmoniaks*, who lived furious among the tombs, in the country of the *Gadarenes*, were cured by *Jesus*, when he permitted the ejected Devils to enter into the herd of swine: but *Mark* and *Luke* tell the same story of *one man* onely, possessed by a legion of Devils [2]. *Austin*, accounting for this difference, says; “ that we are to understand, that
 “ one of the two Dæmoniaks mentioned by
 “ *Matthew* was of a more distinguished and
 “ eminent character; for whose unhappy case
 “ that country was chiefly concerned, and more
 “ particularly solicitous for his safety: so that
 “ the other two Evangelists, being desirous to
 “ signify this, thought it best to mention him
 “ alone, by whose means the fame of this mira-

[1] Nulli discipulorum aperte demonstravit, quis illam traditurus esset, præterquam Johanni, cui secrete percunctanti secrete responsum puto.—Zeger. in Matt. xxvi. 23.

Cum Johannes submissiori

voce interrogaret, Christus submissa itidem voce indicavit—quod cum non intellexissent reliqui Apostoli, &c. Lud. Cappell. in Joh. xiii. 26.

[2] Matt. viii. 28. Mar. v. 2. Luc. viii. 26.

“ cle

“cle had been more widely and effectually
“spread [1].”

Matthew informs us also, that *two blind men* implored the help of *Jesus*, as he was passing along the road, and were cured by him of their blindness: but *Mark* tells the same fact of *one man* only so cured; whose name he particularly mentions, *Bartimeus the son of Timæus*: they both, however, declare the case to have happened, as *Jesus* returned from *Jericho*: but *Luke*, who agrees with *Mark*, in mentioning but *one blind man*, contradicts them both, in affirming the miracle to have been wrought, as *Jesus* was going towards *Jericho* [2]. *Origen* remarks on this passage; “that if we believe the *Evangelists* to have written their Gospels under the “direction of the Holy Ghost, we must believe “at the same time, that three distinct stories are “here recorded; since circumstances so contradictory cannot be true of one and the same. “Yet those, says he, who search deeper into the “sense of Scripture, will find, that it is but one “and the same transaction, delivered in different “words by them all [3].”

St. Austin thinks it a sufficient solution of the difficulty, to suppose the same miracle to have

[1] *Intelligas unum eorum fuisse personæ alicujus clarioris & famosioris, quem regio illa maxime dolebat, & pro ejus salute plurimum satagebat, &c. De Conf.*

Evang. l. ii. § 56.

[2] *Matt. xx. 30. Mar. x. 46. Luc. xviii. 35.*

[3] *Orig. Comm. in Matt. Edit. Huet. T. i. p. 427.*

been

been twice performed, on *two several blind men*; on the one, as *Jesus went*, and on the other, as *he returned from Jericho* [1]. And he gives the same reason again, as in the former case, why *Mark* has chosen to speak onely of one of them; “because his story was more known and famous in that City: as it is evident, he says, from the mention of the name of the man and of his Father also: whom he supposes to have been reduced from some flourishing state of life, to this miserable condition of blindness and beggary: whose cure therefore made the miracle as notorious as his calamity [2].” But it is surely more reasonable to say here, what I find to have been said, by a strenuous advocate of the Gospel, that these several accounts of the Evangelists *are different indeed, but not contradictory: and that Matthew was more accurate in this instance, than either Mark or Luke* [3]; as in the next, we shall find *Luke*, in his turn, more exact than the other two.

The story of *the two Thieves*, who were crucified together with *Jesus*, is related also in the several Gospels with a very remarkable difference. *Matthew* and *Mark* tell us onely in short, that *both the Thieves*, as they were hang-

[1] Nihil aliud restat intelligere, nisi his esse factum hoc miraculum, &c. August. Quæst. Evang. l. ii. Quæst. xlviii. 1.

[2] De Conf. Evan. l. ii. § 125.

[3] At hæc non contraria, sed tantum diversa — & Matthæo, accuratius quam a Luca, historia describitur. —Cuper. arcana Atheism.

revelat. l. ii. p. 169.

ing

ing with him on the Cross, *insulted and reviled Jesus*: whereas *Luke* more particularly declares, that it was but *one of them*, who reviled him, while the other acted a contrary part, and, having rebuked his fellow-sufferer for his insolence, said unto *Jesus*, *Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy Kingdom* [1].

The Critics again, both antient and modern, take great pains to elude the charge of a contradiction: but none have been so hardy, as *Cardinal Hugo*, who, as he is cited by *Erasmus*, treats this passage in *Matthew*, as little better than a *lie*, or *such an account, as one would expect from a man in his cups* [2]. *St. Chrysostom* and *Jerom*, and all the Antients, allow a seeming contradiction in the words, but attempt to clear the Evangelists of it, by supposing, “that both
“the Thieves blasphemed *Jesus* at first, till one
“of them, convinced by the prodigies, which
“then happened, of the Sun darkened and the
“earth trembling, quickly changed his note,
“and, from a sudden conversion and repentance,
“implored his mercy [3].” Which solution,

[1] *Matt.* xxvii. 44. *Mar.* xv. 32. *Luc.* xxiii. 39.

[2] Hoc, inquit, videtur, falsum — ac mox, Hoc, inquit, dicitur, ut putes dictum inter pocula. *Erasm.* in *Mat.* xxvii. 44.

[3] Non quod discrepent Evangelia, sed quod primum uterque blasphemaverit, dehinc sole fugiente, terra com-

motā, — unus crediderit in *Jesum*, & priorem negationem sequenti confessione emendaverit. — *Hier. Comm.* in *Matt.* xxvii. it. *Chrysost.* *Hom.* in *Paralyt.* T. iii. p. 30. Edit. *Bened.* it. *Theophyl.* in *Matt.* xxvii. it. *Zeger.* in *Matt.* *ibid.* & *Hammond,* *ibid.*

though

though embraced, according to custom, by many of the moderns, is justly rejected by others, as a groundless and fictitious comment [1]. For what contradiction, how gross soever, might not easily be solved and eluded, if such a method of interpreting were allowed, which, without any authority from history, indulged a liberty of inventing and supplying every imaginable circumstance, which the fact could possibly admit.

The solution therefore, which is now generally received, is this ; that the Evangelists have used onely *the plural*, instead of *the singular* number, and by a common use of language, have spoken indefinitely or generally, on a single or particular case ; which they illustrate by other examples from the sacred Writers. Yet this, if allowed even to be true, cannot be applicable to the case before us : for when *Matthew* says, that *the Thieves*; and *Mark*, that *they also*, who were crucified with him reviled him : if nothing more had been said by *Luke*, than that this was done onely by one of them ; the difference might possibly have been reconciled : but when *Luke* expressly tell us, that of *the two Thieves* crucified, the one railed on *Jesus*, and the other on the contrary, by a surprizing conversion, confessed his faith in him, and implored his mercy, the difference is

[1] Hæc congeffi, nequis cum antiquis aliquot ad eam interpretationem confugiat, quæ parum probabiliter statuit, Latronem, qui in Christo

credidit, subito a convitiis ad eam pietatem converfum : quo commento sublato, &c. Grot. in Matt. xxvii. 44.

too precise and glaring to be smoothed over by the use of a trope or figure, which some call an *Enallage*, others a *Syllepsis* [1].

What other method then is there left of accounting for this contrariety, but that, which the case itself naturally offers to us; that *Luke* had his account probably from some, who had observed more exactly every circumstance of the Crucifixion, or, by standing nearer to the Cross, had heard more distinctly all, which was said by those, who were crucified? For it is highly improbable, or impossible rather, to imagine, that the other *Evangelists* would have omitted to mention a fact of such moment, and one of the most remarkable in the New Testament, if it had come to their knowledge: a fact, I say, so full both of instruction and of comfort to all Christians, both good and bad; which decides the grand quæstion about the immediate state of departed souls, and the entrance of the just into Paradise: since it is absurd to imagine, that this Thief, after a life wholly spent in riot and wickedness, should by a sudden repentance, how signal or sincere soever, obtain any peculiar reward, beyond what is prepared for the faithful and the righteous [2]. St. *Chrysostom* speaking of this

[1] Sed etiam quia unus hoc fecit, potuit usitato locutionis modo per pluralem numerum significari.—August. de Conf. Evang. l. iii. § 53. See Grot. Erasmus. and

the other Critics on this text.

[2] Mihi quidem tale hoc miraculum videtur, ut illustrius ejusque nullum alibi extare existimem: nullum

very

very case in one of his Sermons, says; "Christ introduced the Thief into Paradise, loaded with an infinite weight of sins. But was this then the sole wonder in the case, that he introduced a Thief into Paradise? No, there is another still greater. For he introduced him preferably to all the world, and to his own Apostles; that no man hereafter might despair of an admission, or lose all hopes of his own Salvation, though he be spending his life in the Courts of Kings, and charged with all the vices, which there abound [1]."

quod afflicto peccatorum mole animos magis attollat. —Heinf. Exercit. Sacr. in Luc. xxiii.

[1] Oper. T. iv. p. 679. C. Edit. Benedict.

N. B. St. Austin, having affirmed in a certain treatise, that Baptism was absolutely necessary to salvation, and being urged with the case of this Thief, as a confutation of his opinion, makes answer; "that the Thief was reckoned by that holy Bishop St. Cyprian, in the number of those Martyrs, who were baptized by their own blood: which was the case of many, in the times of persecution, who had not the opportunity of a regular baptism. That it

"was believed also and not improbably, that, as he hung so near on the Cross, he might be sprinkled with some of that water, which issued, together with blood, from the wound in Jesus's side, and so was washed by that most holy baptism: and farther, that no body could certainly know, whether he had not been regularly baptized either in his prison or before he was taken." [De origin. Anim. l. i. c. 9. l. iii. c. 9.] Which shews, how one groundless hypothesis, obstinately maintained, necessarily creates many more of the same kind, and intangles us of course in a perpetual labyrinth of error and absurdity.

We find likewise an irreconcilable difference, or contradiction, between *Mark* and *John*, concerning the time of the day, when *Jesus* was crucified. *Mark* says expressly, that it was but *the third hour*, or *nine of the clock in the morning*, when they had actually fixed him on the Cross: *John* says, that it was about *the sixth hour*, or *twelve of the clock*, while he was yet under examination before *Pilate* [1].

Peter, Bishop of *Alexandria*, who lived in the third century, declares, that in both those Gospels the third hour was written, as it might be seen in the very original exemplar of *St. John's Gospel*, which was preserved to his time in the Church of *Ephesus*. But this is looked upon by the generality of the Critics, as an undoubted forgery, either of *Bishop Peter*, or some Transcriber of his works, contrived for the sake of reconciling the two Evangelists [2].

St. Jerom, who lived about a century later, tells us just the contrary. “That *the sixth hour* “ was written originally in both the Gospels ;

[1] Mar. xv. 25. John xix. 14.

[2] Vid. Millii Not. in loc. it. Grot.

But of what authority that relation is, may yet be questioned: and the antient *Alexandrian* Copy accords in the main with the printed Copies.—And it is more probable, that the reading,

τεῖτον, the *third hour* in *Mark*, should move some transcribers to read τεῖτον too in *John*, to take away the seeming difference, and to accord the Evangelists, than for any one to turn τεῖτον into ἕκτον, contrary to what was before in *Mark*, if they had found it otherwise. Hammond on Joh. xix. 14.

“ but

“but that the Transcribers instead of writing
 “the word at length, put for it the mark 5,
 “which commonly signified the number six;
 “but was mistaken by other Transcribers for
 “the letter Γ, the numeral mark for *three*;
 “whence the same mistake was propagated into
 “all the later Copies [1].” But this solution is
 clogged likewise with insuperable difficulties,
 and rejected therefore by the Critics; who find,
 that such abbreviations, or numeral marks were
 not commonly used in those early ages [2];
 since none of them are to be met with in the old-
 est of those manuscripts which still remain: nor
 is it possible, that the accidental mistake of one
 or two Transcribers could be transferred univer-
 sally into all the later Copies.

St. *Austin* give us a third solution, much more
 subtil and refined, “that *Mark*, who says, they
 “crucified him at *the third hour*, is not to be un-
 derstood to denote the time of his being nailed
 “to the Cross, but of that clamor, which was
 “made against him by the Jews, while he was
 “still before Pilate, when they cried out, *crucify*
 “*him, crucify him*, designing to insinuate there-

[1] Hoc videtur esse di- 14.

versum, sed non est diversum:
 error Scriptorum fuit: & in
 Marco *hora sexta* scriptum
 fuit: sed multi epifemum
 græcum 5 putaverunt esse Γ,
 &c. Hieron. in Psalm. lxxvii.
 it. Theophylact. in Joh. xix.

[2] Neque vero per notas
 scriptos fuisse numeros in pri-
 migeniis Codicibus, ullo ar-
 gumento constat. Grot. in
 Mar. xv. 25. Zeger. ib. it.
 Millii Not.

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“ by, that the Jews, who made that outcry for
 “ his Crucifixion, were more properly the au-
 “ thors of it, than those ministers, who after-
 “ wards executed the command of their supe-
 “ riors: and that he was more truly crucified at
 “ *the third hour*, by the tongues of the Jews,
 “ than *at the sixth*, by the hands of the Soldiers.
 “ If you do not like my explication, says he,
 “ shew me, how it is possible to solve the con-
 “ tradiction: shew, how Jesus could be cruci-
 “ fied both *at the third* and *the sixth hour* [1].”

The modern Expositors therefore rejecting all the solutions just mentioned, have hit upon another, somewhat more plausible, in which they generally follow each other; viz. “ that the
 “ day among the Jews, beginning from six in
 “ the morning, was divided into four equal por-
 “ tions of three hours each; called *the third*,
 “ *the sixth*, *the ninth*, and *the twelfth hours*: the
 “ three first of which were the stated hours of
 “ public prayer in the Temple, and proclaimed
 “ to the people by the sound of a trumpet. As
 “ *the third hour* then was supposed to continue
 “ till the next sounding of the Trumpet, at *the*
 “ *sixth hour*, so whatever was transacted within
 “ that interval, how near soever to the begin-
 “ ning of the next division, was said, in the
 “ common way of speech, to happen *in the third*

[1] Occulte ostendere vo- qui ministerium Principi
 luit, eos magis crucifixisse præstiterunt, &c.—August. de
 Jesum, qui clamaverunt, ut Conf. Evan. l. iii. § 42.
 crucifigeretur, quam illos,

“ *hour.*”

“*hour* [1].” But though this would bring the Evangelists nearer to each other, yet it will not reconcile them; since *Mark* expressly affirms, that *Jesus* was actually crucified before that hour, in which *Jahn* says as expressly, that *Pilate* was still sitting in judgement upon him. Nor is the notion itself true, that such a gross division of the day was in use among the Jews, as may be shewn from many passages of the New Testament: for though *the third, sixth, and ninth hours*, as being the solemn *hours* of religious worship, were more remarkable than the rest, and for that reason are more frequently mentioned by the sacred writers, yet we find, that their day, like to that of the *Babylonians*, from whom they probably learnt the division of it, as the Greeks also did, was divided into *twelve hours* [2]. *Are there not twelve hours of the days?* says our Lord: and in other places, mention is made of *the seventh, tenth, and the eleventh hour*, &c. [3]. So that on the whole, we must be forced at last, with several of the Critics, to leave the difficulty, just as we found it, chargeable with all the consequences of a manifest inconsistency [4].

[1] Vid. Grot. in Matt. xxvii. 45. Zeger. in Mar. xv. 25. Hammond on Joh. xix. 14.

[2] Τα δώδεκα μίρια τῆς ἡμέρας παρὰ Βαβυλωνίων ἔμαθον Ἕλληνες. Herodot. l. ii. p. 129. Ed. Lond.

[3] John xi. 9. iv. 52. i. 39. Matt. xx. 26.

[4] Ego ampliandum censeo. Nam & illi & hi non satis probarunt mihi dicta sua. Nihil dicit, qui non probat quod dicit. Ego experientia didici, sæpe decep-

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The occurrences also, which passed at our Lord's sepulchre, immediately after his resurrection, are described so variously by different Evangelists, that the learned have been strangely puzzled to reconcile them, and some obliged to give them up as contradictory [1]. *Jerom*, in his answer to a quæstion, which was put to him, how *Mark's account could be reconciled with Matthew's*, says; "that *Mark's* testimony might "be rejected here as spurious, because it was "found onely in a few copies of the Gospels, "and scarce in any of the Greek, and especially, "as it seemed to relate things contrary to the "other Evangelists [2]." The same is confirmed also by other primitive writers, who tell us, that *the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel* were not to be found in many Copies of those early ages. Yet after a most diligent scrutiny into this fact, it is the general opinion of the Critics, that the said verses were certainly a genuine part of that Gospel, but left out by scrupulous or weak Transcribers, as being thought irreconcilable with the other Gospels [3].

tos esse qui nimium crediderunt viris doctis, etiam Theologis, aliquid asserentibus sine fide, sine teste. Drufius, in Mar. xv. 25.

[1] Alia non pauca hoc loco sunt, quæ non facile quis ex Evangelistarum collatione docere posset non esse pignantia. Zeger. in Marc. xvi. 5.

[2] Aut enim non recipimus Marci testimonium, quod in raris fertur Evangelistis, omnibus Græciæ libris pene hoc capitulum non habentibus; præsertim cum diversa atque contraria Evangelistis ceteris narrare videatur. Hier. ad Hedib. Quæst. iii. T. iv. p. 172.

[3] Vid. Simon. Hist. But

But to give an instance or two of the disagreement of the Evangelists, with regard to what passed at the sepulchre; they all tell us, that the women, who came with Jesus, out of Galilee, whose names and number are variously described, having bought sweet spices to anoint his dead body, ran with great eagerness to the sepulchre in the morning after the Sabbath, very early, at or before the break of day: where, according to *Matthew* and *Mark*, they saw but *one Angel*; according to *Luke* and *John*, they saw *two*. The Angel in *Matthew* was sitting without the sepulchre, on the stone, which he had rolled away from the door [1]. The Angel in *Mark* was sitting within the sepulchre on the right side [2]. The two Angels in *Luke*, appeared to them of a sudden within the sepulchre, and stood by them, while they were perplexed and doubting within themselves, what was become of the body of Jesus [3]: but the two Angels in *John* were seen by them, when they first looked into the sepulchre, *the one sitting at the head, the other at the feet, where the body had lain* [4].

To solve these inconsistencies, the Commentators, instead of a single apparition of one or more Angels, generally suppose, that there were several, at least *three*: and though the Evangelists seem to describe but one visit of the women

Crit. du Nouveau Test. c. xi.

jt. Millii Not. in Mar. xvi.

8. Edit. N. T.

[1] Matt. xxviii. 2.

[2] Mar. xvi. 5.

[3] Luk. xxiv. 4.

[4] Joh. xx. 12.

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to the sepulchre, they imagine, that there were many; sometimes of *them all in company together*; sometimes singly, *now of one and then of another*; as if they had done nothing that whole morning, but run backwards and forwards between the city and the tomb [1]. *Theophylast* says, “ that
“ the Angel, who was first seen sitting on the
“ stone at the door, must be supposed to have
“ risen up, as soon as the women arrived, and
“ gone before them into the sepulchre, where he
“ appeared to them again on the right, in order
“ to make *Matthew* consistent with *Mark*: and
“ *Austin* tells us, that the two Angels within the
“ sepulchre, who were sitting, the one at the
“ head, the other at the feet, where Jesus had
“ lain, must be supposed to have stood up, as
“ soon as the women entered, to reconcile *John’s*
“ account with *Luke’s* [2].” And what effect
can all this have, but to confirm that very
charge, which they labor to elude, of confusion
and inaccuracy in the sacred writers; by sup-
posing them to have jumbled and blended into

[1] Quod diversa tempora
mulierum describuntur, non
mendacii signum est, ut im-
pii objiciunt, sed sedulæ vi-
sitationis officium: dum cre-
bro absunt & recurrunt.
Hier. in Matt. xxviii.

Fieri enim potuit, ut mu-
lieres istæ non semel, neque
omnes simul, sed semel simul,
postea nunc hæc nunc illa,

&c. Cuper. Arcana Atheism.
revelat. ii. p. 172. it.
Toinard. Harm. Evan. p.
132, &c.

[2] Vid. Theophyl. in
Matt. xxviii.

Hic intelligendi sunt sur-
rexisse Angeli, ut etiam
stantes viderentur, sicut eos
Lucas commemorat. August.
Conf. Evan. l. iii. § 69.

one

one story many different transactions, which, in order to be rightly understood, ought to have been separated and distinguished from each other!

According to *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, the women, as soon as they had seen the Angels, and were informed by them of our Lord's resurrection, returned in all haste to carry the news of it to the Apostles; upon which *Peter* ran immediately to the sepulchre. But *John*, who wrote the last of them, and after he had seen their accounts, tells a quite contrary story; that before any apparition, *Mary*, seeing onely the stone taken away from the door of the sepulchre, hastened back to tell it to *Peter*, and to the other Apostle, whom *Jesus* loved, and that *Peter*, accompanied by that Apostle, ran away directly to the place, and saw the linen cloaths lying, and the napkin, which was about the head of *Jesus*, wrapped up in a place by itself, and then went back to their own home, without seeing any Angel, or *Jesus* himself, as the women are said to have done.

Dr. *Hammond*, explaining the reason of this difference, says, "that *Luke* writing from notes, which he had collected, and not from his own knowledge, observes not so exactly the order of time, wherein things were done or spoken; but oftentimes in another method puts together things of affinity to one another, though not done or said at the same time [1]."

[1] Hammond on John xx. 11.

But

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But this solution, though proper on other occasions, will not serve on this: because the want of order, so observable in the one, or the other of these narrations, seems chargeable to *John*, rather than to the rest, whose relation of the matter is again confirmed and repeated in the conversation of the *two Disciples going to Emmaus* [1]. *Grotius*, who usually imputes these difficulties to the general custom of the Evangelists, of neglecting the order of time in which things were transacted, yet assigns a special reason why *John*, in this particular case, might think fit to use a little artifice, and industriously invert the true order of the facts; “for lest the
“testimony of women, in a point of such moment as *the resurrection of Jesus*, might be
“suspected and ridiculed, as it afterwards really
“was, *John*, he imagines, resolved to place *Peter’s* testimony and his own before it, though
“out of their proper time: the truth of which,
“at the time of writing his Gospel, *Peter* had
“already sealed with his blood, as he himself
“was prepared also to do, whenever he should
“be called to it [2].”

It is very remarkable also, that the short In-

[1] Luc. xxiv. 23, 24.

[2] Apud Johannem eadem quæ hic historia narratur, nihil enim video cur aliam putemus, cum tot circumstantiæ, congruant.— Neque Johanni cur naturalem hic ordinem inverteret

justa causa defuit. Sciebat quam imbecille futurum esset apud multos testimonium muliebri—quare Johannes acturus de re, ut verissima, ita creditu difficili, suum & *Petri* testimonium narrationi præstruxit, &c. in Matt. xxviii. 2.

scription

scription or Title, which, by *Pilate's* order, was fixed upon the Cross, over the head of *Jesus*, is delivered with some variation, by every one of the Evangelists.

Matthew says ; They set up over his head his accusation written,

THIS IS IESVS THE KING OF THE IEWS[1].

Mark ; The superscription of his accusation was written over ;

THE KING OF THE IEWS[2].

Luke ; A superscription also was written over him, in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew ;

THIS IS THE KING OF THE IEWS[3].

John ; *Pilate* wrote a Title, and put it on the Cross, and the writing was ;

IESVS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE IEWS[4].

Now all these accounts agree very well with regard to the sense of them, yet it is certain, that there is but one of the four which exhibits the true Inscription : and though a difference so trifling cannot reflect any disgrace on the veracity of *the Evangelists*, it shews however a want of that accuracy and exactness of truth, which we expect from all those, who undertake to transmit to posterity the authentic copies of public Inscriptions.

I shall add one instance more of the same kind, trifling indeed with regard to the point

[1] Matt. xxvii. 37.

[2] Mark xv. 26.

[3] Luke xxiii. 38.

[4] John xix. 19.

in

in difference, yet effectual to evince the same sort of inadvertency or mistake, with regard to the strictness of truth. *Matthew*, reciting the testimony of *John Baptist*, concerning *Jesus*, gives these words as a part of it; *whose shoes I am not worthy to bear* [1]: but the other Evangelists tell us, that the words were, *the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and untie* [2]. Upon which *St. Austin* makes the following remark: “That to carry shoes, and to untie the latchet of a shoe, seem indeed to be different, not in words only, or the order of them, or in the manner of speaking, but in the very thing or fact itself—so that he, who has recorded the words which were really spoken by the Baptist, has told us the truth, while he, who has reported them differently, though he may not be guilty of a lie, will be thought to have put one thing for another through want of memory. But no sort of falsehood, whether it procede from a lie or forgetfulness, ought to be imputed to the Evangelists; wherefore, if the Baptist, when he spoke of our Lord’s shoes, had no other meaning, but to signify the excellence of *Jesus* and his own humility, it was the same thing, whether he spoke of carrying or untying shoes; and whoever mentioned the shoes afterwards in either way, with the same view of

[1] *Matt.* iii. 11. [2] *Mark* i. 7. *Luke* iii. 16. *John* i. 17.

“expressing

“expressing his humility, rightly expressed the Baptist’s will and meaning [1].”

I shall not trouble the reader with any more instances of this kind, out of the great number which has been collected by the writers on this subject: these which I have already produced, are sufficient for my purpose, and the use which I shall now proceed to make of them.

In the first place then, they manifestly shew, that many of the facts which are recorded in the Gospels, are related so variously by the several Evangelists, that they cannot possibly be reconciled, or rendered consistent, by all the art and subtilty of the most expert Commentators. Origen declares, “that if any one carefully examines the inconsistencies of the four Gospels with regard to historical facts,—he will find himself giddy, as it were, and no longer insist on the truth of them all, but chuse to adhere to one of them singly, not daring wholly to reject the faith of Christ; or else, if he admits them all, he must allow at the same time, that the truth of them does not lie in the out-

[1] Non enim verbis, aut verborum ordine, aut aliquo genere locutionis, sed etiam re ipsa videtur aliud esse, *cakeamenti portare*, aliud, *corrigiam cakeamenti solvere*.—Si enim alterum horum dixit, ille verum videtur narrasse, qui hoc potuit narrare quod dixit: qui autem aliud, et si non est mentitus, certe vel oblitus, aliud pro alio dixisse putabitur. Omnem autem falsitatem abesse ab Evangelistis decet: non solum eam quæ mentiendo promitur, sed etiam eam, quæ obliviscendo, &c. De Consensu Evangelist. l. ii. § 29.

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“ward character or letter of them [1].” It will be answered, perhaps, that *Origen* was so addicted to the allegorical sense of Scripture, and so prejudiced in its favor, as not to care what absurdities were charged upon the literal text, if he could but draw a mystery out of it. But though this be granted, it will not invalidate his charge of inconsistency on the letter of the Gospels; of which, by his indefatigable study of the Scriptures, he was of all men the most competent Judge; and it was the reality of this very charge, which gave birth to those extravagant interpretations in which he indulged himself [2].

St. *Austin* lays down a general rule for the solution of all these difficulties, which he earnestly recommends to our attention and observance, “that whenever we find the Evangelists inconsistent, in their accounts of any thing said, or done, by our Lord, we are not to suppose them speaking of the same thing, but of some other, very like to it, said or done at a different time. For it is a *sacrilegious vanity*, he says, to calumniate the Gospels, rather than believe the same thing to have been twice performed, when no man can prove, that it could not really be so: and when this rule fails, his next direction is, to take up with any solution, rather than allow it as a conse-

[1] Comment. in Johan. enarratione, unum Origenem T. ii. p. 151. Edit. Huet. decem Orthodoxis anteposuerim. *Erasm.* in Gal. ii. 10.

[2] Ego, in Scripturarum

“quence,

“quence, that any of the Evangelists had been
“guilty, either of a lie or a mistake [1].” Which
is nothing else in effect, but to require us to ad-
here to systems in opposition to facts, and to
renounce our senses rather than our prejudices.
His rule however has been religiously observed
by the Commentators, who recur to it on all
occasions, and declare the same thing to have
been done twice or thrice, or till the repetition
of it will clear up every difficulty, which disturbs
and perplexes them.

But the point which I am affirming, is evi-
dently proved, not onely by the facts and in-
stances produced above, but by the very solu-
tions and interpretations, which are given of
them upon the contrary hypothesis, which tho’
contrived by men of the greatest learning and
sagacity in all ages, are yet, generally speaking,
so forced and unnatural, that they betray them-
selves, to be nothing else but an artful defence
of error. Whereas if they would but candidly

[1] Quod commendare
memoriæ diligenter debemus
—ut si quando talia singula
apud singulos invenerimus,
atque in eis contrarium, quod
solvi non possit, occurrat no-
bis, non hoc esse factum, sed
aliud simile.—De Conf. E-
vang. l. ii. § 69.

Etiam atque etiam retinen-
dum est, sæpius Dominum
eadem dixisse, ut quod exis-
tente contrario solvi non po-

tuerit, bis dictum intelligatur.
Ib. l. ii. § 106.

Calumniari autem Evan-
gelio, dum non credit iterum
factum, quod iterum fieri non
potuisse nemo convincit, Sa-
crilegæ vanitatis est. Ib. § 77.

Tantum non putes conse-
quens esse, ut quilibet Evan-
gelistarum mentitus sit, aut in
tanto & tam sancto culmine
auctoritatis erraverit. De
Conf. Evang. l. iii. § 43.

own, as some few of them indeed have done, that the contradictions of the Evangelists, like to those of all other Authors, were owing to want of accuracy in recording circumstances of little moment; or to slips of memory, or to different informations, all would be easily and naturally accounted for, without any real offence or hurt to the authority of the Gospel.

For to run over again the several instances produced above; what advantage can the enemies of our religion draw from the difficulties, which are found in the two Genealogies? since they both of them agree, in affirming all, which a Christian is concerned to believe on that article; *that Jesus was of the seed of Abraham; of the family of David; and born in the flesh of the Virgin Mary.* What can it signify to us, whether it was *one woman only, or two*, who anointed Jesus; or whether they anointed his head or his feet? since all that is instructive in the story, may be equally learnt in either case; from the woman, that extraordinary mercies should produce a proportionable return of gratitude and love: from Jesus, a prediction which we see accomplished at this day; *that the zeal of this woman should be propagated with his Gospel over the face of the earth* [1]. Of what consequence can it be, that Judas's treachery is told with some variation by the different Evangelists? since all, that is of service to religion, is equally clear in them all; that Jesus foretold to his Dis-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 13.

ciples both the Traitor and his treason, that when it should come to pass, *they might believe him to be the Christ* [1]. Of what use could it be to know, whether it was *one or two* possessed with Devils; and *one or two* blind, whom *Jesus* cured, and whether it happened, as he was going, or as he was returning from *Jericho*? it is enough to be assured, that all kinds of diseases yielded equally to his power, and were cured by the word of his mouth. Lastly, what if the Evangelists do not agree about the precise time of his crucifixion; whether it was *at the third*, or *the sixth hour*: or in the story of his resurrection, whether *one or two Angels* appeared; whether *sitting or standing*, or whether *before or after Peter's coming* to the Sepulchre? it is sufficient that they agree, in confirming all the principal circumstances, and in declaring them to have been accompanied with such prodigies, as were suitable to the dignity and importance of those great events.

Nay, all these differences and inconsistencies are so far from reflecting any discredit on Christianity, that, on the contrary, they are found to be of real service towards illustrating the truth of it. *This very thing*, says *Theophylact*, gives a stronger proof of the integrity of the Evangelists, that they have not agreed in all points: for otherwise, they might have been suspected to have written by complicity [2]. But while they really tend to

[1] John xiii. 19.

[2] Δι' αὐτὸ γὰρ τῶν πολλοῦ ἀλη-

establish the authority of the Evangelists, they clearly overthrow that hypothesis, which is commonly entertained concerning them, that in compiling their several Gospels, *they were constantly inspired and directed by an unerring Spirit.* This, I say, is evident, as well from the facts above stated, as from the express declarations of the Evangelists themselves, who are so far from pretending to any such privilege, that they in effect disclaim it, placing their whole credit on a foundation, merely human and common to all other writers; on their knowledge of the truth of what they deliver, and on their fidelity in delivering it to the best of their knowledge.

Luke professes, that he had received all the principal facts of his Gospel, *from those, who had been eye-witnesses and actors in them; from whom he had got a perfect information of all things from the very beginning* [1]. John declares, *that he himself saw, and was present at all the transactions, which he relates: that he knew them therefore to be true, and recorded them, that others also might know and believe them:* which declaration he repeats in the end of his Gospel, as the seal of its veracity [2]. And this is the same profession, which is made by all other Historians, in order to procure credit to what they relate. Herodotus declares in several places, *that he writes*

θεύων, ὅτι μὴ κατὰ πάντα ὁμοφώνησαν, &c. Theophyl. Proem. in Matt. [1] Luke i. 1, 2. [2] John xix. 35. xxi. 24. 1 Ep. i. 1, 2, 3.

from

from his own knowledge and eye-sight: and in others, from the best information which he could get: and Thucydides tells us, like John, that he himself was present at many of the transactions recorded by him: and in others, like Luke, that he had done every thing in his power, to procure an exact account of them from those, who had been actors in them [1]. And this likewise is the foundation, on which the Advocates of Christianity, both ancient and modern, have constantly put the credibility of the Evangelical history; that the Authors of it were, either eye-witnesses of it themselves, or wrote from the information of those who were. Which reasoning, as solid and rational as it has been thought in all ages, yet, upon the hypothesis of a perpetual inspiration, would be wholly trifling and impertinent; since it could not be of any moment, whether they knew any thing or nothing of the matters related by them, if, as some vainly imagine, they were but mere organs or pipes, through which God thought fit to convey the knowledge of certain extraordinary facts and divine truths to the world [2].

[1] Τα δὲ αὐτοὶ θεησάμενοι
λέγουσι, τῶν μὲν κατὰ ἀκοὴν πα-
ραλαβόντες. Herod. l. ii. p.
147. Edit. Lond.

Οἱ αὐτοὶ τε παρῆν, καὶ παρὰ
τῶν ἄλλων ὥστε δύνατο ἀκριβοῦς
ἐπὶ ἰκαστῇ ἐπιεῖλθαι. Thucyd.
l. i. p. 13. Ed. Oxon.

[2] Spiritus Sancti, cujus
ipsi erant organa. Casaub.

Exercit. 15. ad Baron. Ann.
12.

Ita nimirum, ut non solum
sententiæ, sed & verba singu-
la, & verborum ordo ac tota
dispositio sit a Deo, tanquam
per semetipsum loquente.—
Estius in 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Litterulam unam aut no-
tam esse, aut inscio Evan-

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It was once thought necessary, for the honor of the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the *Septuagint*, to believe, "that it was
 "divinely inspired and dictated by God; and
 "that seventy persons, shut up separately in as
 "many different Cells, produced their several
 "translations, all agreeing to a tittle with each
 "other, both in the sense and the words." This, though affirmed by all the primitive Fathers, as well as by many of the learned moderns, is now universally considered, as an undoubted fiction, contrived for the sake of conciliating the greater reverence to that ancient version; which was read, instead of the original Hebrew, in all the Synagogues of the Hellenistic Jews [1]. For besides the absurdities which are charged upon this story, and the impertinence of recurring to a miracle, where there was no occasion for it, and where nothing was wanted to make such a translation, but a competent skill in two languages, the many imperfections of the version itself confute the pretence of its divine origin. The case is the same with the Gospels; the hypothesis of their inspiration was piously invented, to reflect the greater lustre upon them,

gelista irreppisse nego. Lightfoot, in Matt. xxvii. 9.

[1] Traditur sane mirabilem, planeque divinum in eorum verbis fuisse consensum, ut cum ad hoc opus separatim singuli sederint, ita enim eorum fidem Ptolemæo pla-

cuit explorare, in nullo verbo, vel verborum ordine alter ab altero discreparet, &c. August. de Civ. D. l. xviii. c. 42. See this story related at large, and confuted in Dr. Prideaux's *Connex.* Vol. ii. p. 21,

where

where there was not the least want of it: since nothing more is required to establish their authority, than to know, as we do in this case, that the compilers of them were perfectly informed of all the important facts, which they had undertaken to relate, and zealous to publish them for the common benefit of mankind: while many little omissions and inaccuracies, which are observable in their several narratives, clearly shew, that they could not be guided by a divine and infallible spirit. But this will be made still more evident, by considering, what the Ancients have delivered to us concerning them.

Matthew, as the primitive writers generally agree, wrote his Gospel the first, and in *the Hebrew tongue*: which, for that reason, could not be of general use, nor hardly indeed any farther, than to the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, where it was published: for the Greek language was used at that time, not only by the Jews, even in their own country, but was the universal language of *the East* [1]. This original Gospel then being of little or no service beyond the precincts of *Jerusalem*, was soon laid aside, and

[1] Solus Matthæus Hebræo scripsisse perhibetur eloquio, ceteri Græco. Aug. de Cónf. Evang. l. i. § 4.

Primus Matthæus Evangelium in Judæa Hebræo Sermone edidit. Hieron. Proem. in Matth. Vid. Græcor, Pa-

trum testimonia de Matthæo a Millio collect. in Edit. N. T.

—Excepto sermone Græco, quo omnis Oriens loquitur. Hieron. in Epist. ad Galat. Op. T. iv. p. 255. Vid. Lightf. Hor. Heb. in Matt. j.

within a few ages afterwards quite lost; and a Greek translation of it made by *some body unknown*, took its place very early, and was received in all Churches, as it is at this day, with a credit and authority equal to that of an Original. In which, though the Translator may be presumed to have been both faithful and equal to the task, yet, for any thing that we know, he may have been guilty of some mistakes, as St. *Jerom* supposes him to have actually been, and endeavours to shew, in one particular instance [1].

Mark followed *Matthew*; and perceiving, as we may imagine, in his travels, that an History of our Saviour's life and acts was every where wanted and greedily desired, by the new converts, he wrote his Gospel, under the direction, as it is believed, of St. *Peter*, whose disciple he was: in which, though he has made some few variations, as well as additions to the former Gospel of *Matthew*, yet he agrees with it so exactly in most particulars, that, as it is said above, he is thought by the Commentators to have done little more than epitomize it [2].

[1] Quod quis postea in Græcum transtulerit non satis certum. Hieron. de Scripto-rib. Eccles. in Matt.

Mihi videtur Matthæum, qui Evangelium Hebraico sermone conscripsit, non tam *vespere* dixisse, quam *sero*; & eum, qui interpretatus est, verbi ambiguitate deceptum,

non *sero*, interpretatum esse, sed *vespere*. Ad Hedib. T. iv. par. i. p. 173.

[2] Marcus eum subsequutus, brevior ejus videtur. August. de Consens. Evan. l. i. § 4.

Ut sæpe ei præstet interpretis vicem. Grot. in Matt. xxviii. 1.

Luke comes next, a Physician of *Antioch*, and a convert probably from paganism: who perceiving, that many others had published accounts, either false or imperfect, concerning the life and actions of *Jesus*, thought it necessary to write a third Gospel, under the direction, as it is thought, of *St. Paul*; and to the intent, as he himself declares, that the new Christians might be informed of the certain truth of those things, in which they had been instructed, and of which he had procured a perfect information from those, who had been eye-witnesses. But as he wrote at second hand, and from hearsay only, of things which he himself had not seen, he is observed to have jumbled his facts together more confusedly, and described them more inaccurately than the rest, who related them from their own knowledge [1].

[1] Vid. Testimonia Græcor. de Luca a Millio collecta.

Evangelium, sicut audierat, scripsit; Acta vero Apostolorum, sicut viderat. Hieron. de Scriptoris. Eccles.

Apparet illum non semel ob rerum coherentiam, connexuisse quæ temporibus erant discreta, quod suis locis patefiet. Grot in Luc. i. 3.

Luke, who wrote his story from collections, which he had from others, and compiled it himself, hath not so exactly observed the order, wherein the things were

done, &c. Hammond, Pref. in Matt.

N. B. This account of *Luke* may help us to solve that difficulty in the Martyr *Stephen's* speech, [Act. vii. 16.] in which it is said, that *the Patriarchs were buried in Sichem, in the Sepulchre which Abraham bought of the Sons of Emor*: whereas, it was not *Abraham*, but *Jacob*, who bought that Sepulchre: and the Sepulchre, which *Abraham* purchased, was in a different place, and bought of a different person; *Ephron the*

John

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John published his Gospel, the last of the four, to supply the defects and imperfections of the other three; moved to it, as the Primitive Fathers inform us, "By the earnest solicitation of his friends, and of all the Bishops of *Asia*, who were persuaded, that such an history from him, would be of more service, and more likely to gain credit than any which were already published. Whereupon, at their

Hittite, the Son of Zabar. [Gen. xxiii. it. xxxiii. 19. it. *John*. xxiv. 32.] This passage then, as it now stands in the book of the Acts, is a manifest contradiction to the truth of history, as all the Critics acknowledge; some of whom have attempted to give an emendation of the text, but to no purpose, since the consent of all the copies in all ages, effectually establishes the present reading: others have severally offered the best solutions, which they could invent, yet all of them forced and ridiculous, and no body, besides *Cappellus*, has ventured to intimate, that it might possibly be a slip of memory in *Stephen* himself. Vid. *Cappelli* Not. in Act. vii. 16.

But it does not seem probable, that a person full of the Holy Ghost, as *Stephen* is said to have been, and who appears also, from this very

speech, to have been greatly conversant with the *Mosaic* writings, should be capable of committing such a blunder, which may easily and naturally be accounted for by ascribing it to *Luke*, the compiler of the Acts; who being a late convert from Paganism, and but imperfectly acquainted with the Jewish learning and history, might easily mistake in the names of persons, and confound two facts so nearly resembling each other. So that *Cappellus* might, with as much reason, have charged *Luke* with a mistake here, as he has actually done elsewhere, in the case of *Thendas*, the Impostor, who, according to *Josephus*, did not make his appearance till several years after that time, in which *Luke* introduces him. Acts vii. 16. vid. *Cappelli* not.

“ request,

“ request, having read over the other Gospels,
 “ he confirmed in general the truth of them,
 “ yet observed, that many things of conse-
 “ quence were either wholly omitted, or too
 “ slightly touched in them; especially the ac-
 “ tions of *Jesus*, which preceded the death of
 “ *John the Baptist*, and almost all those miracles,
 “ which deserved the most to be recorded, and
 “ were the properest for instruction; and above
 “ all, the declaration of his divinity and exist-
 “ ence, prævious to his birth at *Bethlehem*. For
 “ which reasons, as all the Ancients affirm, he
 “ undertook at last, with some reluctance, to
 “ write his own Gospel in a very advanced
 “ age:” which on that account *Grotius* calls a
 “ collection of things omitted by the other three. And
 “ thus, as a writer of Antiquity observes, “ we
 “ have now a complete and perfect history of
 “ the Life and Acts of *Jesus*: for what was not
 “ taken notice of by *Matthew*, is recorded by
 “ *Mark*: what was forgotten by *Mark*, is added
 “ by *Luke*: and what was omitted still by all
 “ the three, is supplied by *John* [1].”

This is the sum of what primitive Anti-
 quity has delivered, concerning the history of
 the Gospels; which is utterly inconsistent with
 the notion of their being divinely inspired: for

[1] Coactus est ab omni-
 bus pene tunc Asiæ Episco-
 pis, & multarum Ecclesiarum
 legationibus de divinitate Sal-
 vatoris altius scribere, &c.
Hieron. Prolog. in Matt.—

*Vid. Testimonia Patrum Græ-
 cor. de Johanne, a Millio col-
 lecta.*—

Additum a Johanne, in
 hac quasi prætermisissorum col-
 lectione. *Grot. in Joan.*

if

if any one of them had been a perfect work, as every work must needs be which is directed by the Spirit of God, there had been no use or want of the rest; nor would they in reality have been written: unless we can believe, with some of the Primitive Fathers, *that it was necessary that there should be four: because there are four elements; four climates; four cardinal winds; four cardinal virtues, &c* [1].

The belief then of *the Inspiration and absolute infallibility of the Evangelists*, seems to be more absurd, than even of Transubstantiation itself: for this, though repugnant to sense, is supported by the express words of Scripture; whereas the other, not less contrary to sense, is contrary at the same time to the declarations of the Evangelists themselves. Yet such is the force of prejudice, that the generality of Expositors take great pains to search out texts and arguments for the support of this favorite hypothesis; not considering, that if they were able to produce any, from which they could extort such an interpretation, it would tend onely to the hurt and discredit of Christianity itself, by fastening upon it a doctrine, contradictory to fact and experience.

But in truth, all the arguments which are alledged for this doctrine, are generally so trifling, that instead of confirming, they render it

[1] Quatuor, quoniam quatuor sunt partes Orbis terræ, 1. i. § 3. it. vid. Irenæum. 1. iii. c. 11. Theophyl. Proæt. in Matt. Aug. de Conf. Evang.

onely

onely more contemptible to men of judgement. Thus the learned *Lightfoot* attempts to prove the divine inspiration of *Luke*, from the word *ἀνωθεν*, in the preface of his Gospel, which implies, as is interpreted by this Critic, that *Luke* had received his information of the things which he relates, *from Above, or from Heaven* [1]: whereas it signifies nothing more, but that he had searched and traced them out from their very source, or beginning: in which sense it is frequently applied by all the best writers of antiquity, and even by *Luke* himself in another place [2].

I shall not dwell therefore any longer on the proof of this point; which, from the facts above recited, and the professions of the Evangelists themselves, as well as the accounts which are given of them by the ancients, seems evident to a demonstration; but shall procede, as I at first proposed, to consider, what use may be made of the opinion here affirmed, in the controversies which have been agitated, concerning *the grounds of Christianity*, and especially in those, which relate to *the prophecies of the Old Testament*, as they are cited and applied in the New.

Soon after *Jesus* had entered upon his ministry, and gathered to himself a number of Disci-

[1] Affecuto omnia cœlitus vel e supernis.—Hunc sensum nos amplectimur: utpote quod extra omnem controversiam sit, eum cœlesti afflatu calamus dirigente ea scripsisse, quæ scripsit. Vid. Hor. Hebraic. in Luc. i. & in Act. i.

[2] Vid. Erasm. & Grot. in Luc. i. 3. it. in Act. xxvi. 5.

ples,

ples, he chose out of them twelve, to be his immediate companions and constant attendants during his residence on earth, and, after his ascension into heaven, to be the principal instruments of publishing his religion to all nations. These were called his Apostles; persons of the lowest condition of life, chiefly Fishermen; void of every ornament and advantage, which learning, art, and languages, usually add to the characters and faculties of men: and chosen by their Master for this very reason, that the triumphs of his Gospel might be the more conspicuous, in subduing all the powers and wisdom of the world by the ministry of persons so abject and despicable. The Jews in the mean while, to whom the Gospel was in the first place proposed, were zealously fond of their old religion, and on that account, strongly prejudiced against his new one: and being forbidden by their law, to give credit even to miracles, when wrought in favor of doctrines which seemed to contradict the institutions of *Moses*, were the more jealous, and on their guard against this new Prophet; lest, by his mighty works, he might lead the people astray from their ancient worship. Wherefore *Jesus*, in order to remove their scruples, and calm their apprehensions, took all occasions to convince them, that he was not come to destroy, but to fulfil their law; that he was the very *Messiah*, whom *Moses* and the *Prophets* had foretold and prepared them to expect; and that his character and commission

were

were clearly described and prefigured to them in their own books, to which he appealed, as the witnesses of his veracity [1].

This was the general doctrine of *Jesus*: but the Evangelists have recorded but very few of the particular prophecies, which he applied, to the confirmation of it: the event however shews, that it was so well supported by him, as to have great weight with many of the Jews.

The Apostles then, having been specially instructed in this point by their Master, before his death, and more clearly still after his resurrection, no sooner entered upon their ministry, than they made this, as they were commanded [2], the chief subject of their preaching; *that the person and character of Jesus were described and foretold by the Law and the Prophets*: by the force of which argument the Apostle *Peter*, in one of his first sermons, is said to have converted *three thousand souls* [3]. The rest of the Apostles, as we may imagine, were not less zealous and active, in publishing the same doctrine, both by preaching and writing; and *Matthew* especially, who wrote his Gospel for the particular information of the Jews, appears to have been more diligent than any of them, in searching the old Scriptures for passages, which in any sense could be applied to some circumstance or action of *Jesus's* life: and, like all other men, warmly persuaded and fond of a new hypothesis, seems

[1] Matt. v. 17. John v. 39, 45, 46; &c. [2] Acts x.

42. [3] Acts ii. 41.

to have strained it in a few instances, farther than it would naturally reach, and to have applied it even to some, to which it has no relation at all.

Mr. *Whiston*, of whose piety and zeal for the honor of Christianity no man can doubt, has freely and candidly owned, *that the Apostles might possibly be supposed, to have been mistaken sometimes in their applications of these prophecies* [1]. If their inspiration therefore, or infallibility, was thrown out of this question, what I am here saying of *Matthew*, would readily be admitted; that, out of zeal for an Hypothesis, of whose truth he was assured, he might be apt, like all other men, to stretch it to cases to which it did not belong. This is allowed with regard to the *Jewish Doctors*, by an ingenious and orthodox Defender of Christianity, who says; “ that
 “ under the strong expectations, which they entertained of *the coming of a Messiah*, it may
 “ well be supposed, that the learned among
 “ them had, with more than ordinary attention,
 “ searched the prophetic writings for marks and
 “ designations of him, and might probably apprehend him to be delineated in some passages, which had no relation to him. If we
 “ consider the obscurity of the prophecies before their completion; how apt a man, who
 “ reads such writings with an intention to one
 “ point, would be, to fancy a relation to it, and
 “ with what fondness he would entertain any
 “ appearance of so reputable a discovery; it

[1] See his *Litteral Accomplishment*, p. 20. § x.

can

“ can scarce be imagined, but that instances of
 “ this kind must have happened [1].” What
 this writer thinks so probable of the learned
 Doctors of the Jews, must needs appear more
 probable of the Apostles, who were not learned:
 who, as I have shewn elsewhere, being liable to
 slight mistakes, and inadvertencies, in the repre-
 sentation of plain and ordinary events, may more
 reasonably be presumed to be so, in the interpre-
 tation of dark prophecies. But as it is not my
 design to inquire into probabilities, but into
 facts, so I shall lay before the reader two or three
 examples of *Matthew's* method of citing and ap-
 plying the *prophecies of the Old Testament* to the
 transactions of the New.

Thus, says he, it is written by the Prophet;
*And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah, art by
 no means the least among the Princes of Judah,
 for out of thee shall come a Governor, who shall rule
 my people Israel.* But the words of the Prophet
 are; *But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though
 thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out
 of thee, &c.* [2]. *St. Jerom* observes on this
 place, “ that there is a strange difference between
 “ *Matthew* and the Septuagint-translation of
 “ the Bible, but a stranger still between him
 “ and the Hebrew text, for he agrees with nei-
 “ ther of them either in the words or the sense.”
 And he suggests two reasons for this disagree-
 ment; “ that *Matthew* might probably intend,

[1] Dr. Rogers Sermon. v. p. 123.
 Micah v. 2.

[2] Matt. ii. 5, 6.

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“ by this way of applying Scripture, to reprove
 “ the *Scribes and Pharisees*, who used the same
 “ negligent manner of interpreting it: or else,
 “ that the Evangelists and Apostles did not cite
 “ the passages of the Old Testament from books,
 “ but from their memories, which sometimes
 “ failed them, and gave rise to those variations,
 “ which are found among them in the order,
 “ and in the words, and sometimes also in the
 “ sense [1].”

Modern Commentators are generally more cautious of charging the least suspicion of a mistake on the Evangelist, though they cannot reconcile his meaning with that of the Prophet: but *Erasmus* laughs at the weakness of those, who take the authority of the Scriptures to be endangered by the allowance of an error in them, and declares; that the divine Spirit, who governed the minds of the Apostles, suffered them on some occasions to err, through ignorance, affection, or wrong judgement, without any real detriment to the credit of the Gospel [2].”

[1] Quanta fit inter Mat-
 theum & Septuaginta, ver-
 borum ordinisq; discordia,
 sic magis admiraberis, si He-
 braicum videas — sensusque
 contrarius est, Septuaginta
 sibi hoc in loco & Hebraico
 concordante. — Hieron. de
 Opt. gen. interpret. T. iv.
 par. ii. p. 253. — It. Ejsdem

Comm. in Micah. v. T. iii.
 p. 1531.

[2] Neque enim continuo
 vacillet totius Scripturæ auc-
 toritas, sicubi variet vel in
 verbis vel in sensu — Spiritus
 ille divinus mentium Apo-
 stolicarum moderator passus
 est suos ignorare quædam &
 labi, &c. in Matt. ii. 6.

Matthew

Matthew having shewn the place of our Saviour's birth to have been foretold by the Prophets, proceeds to shew the same also, concerning the place of his habitation. *He came, says he, and dwelt in a City called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene* [1]. Now it is agreed by all, that the passage cited here by *Matthew*, as delivered by the Prophets, is not to be found in any Prophet or writer of the Old Testament whatsoever : and it is pleasant to see, to what ridiculous shifts the Commentatofs are driven, in their attempts to account for it [2]. They first adapt some particular senses of their own to the word, *Nazarene*, in which still they all differ from each other, and then labor to shew, that in one or other of those senses, it may be collected from several dispersed passages, and obscure hints found in different parts of the Old Testament. *Grotius* tells us, *that when the Evangelists cite the Prophets, in this loose and general manner, it frequently indicates a sense, picked up from many separate passages of the Old Testament, rather than from any single text* [3]. Yet no man has ever pretended to make out from any or all

[1] Matt. ii. 23.

[2] This text, says Mr. *Whiston*, is intirely wanting in all our Copies, Hebrew and Greek, nor do there at present the least footsteps of it remain, since the Jews corrupted their Copies.—

See Essay on the O. T. p. 104. it. The Literal Accomplishment of Script. Prophecies, p. 4.

[3] Sæpe sensum multis ex locis depromptum, magis quam unus loci verba indicat. &c. Grot. in loc.

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those different texts, that sense of the word *Nazarene*, which is here applied by *Matthew*, to denote an inhabitant of Nazareth. The difficulty is, says *Dr. Hammond*, how his dwelling at Nazareth should be said to be the completion of a prophecy, which relates not at all to his dwelling there [1]. The learned, says *Heinfius*, have taken such pains about this passage, that whole books have been written upon it; yet not one writer has been able to hit upon any thing, which could satisfy even himself [2].

Again; Then was fulfilled, says *Matthew*, that which was spoken by *Jeremiah the Prophet*, saying; And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the Potter's field, as the Lord appointed me [3]. This prophecy, as all the Expositors allow, is not to be found in the Prophet *Jeremiah*, from whom it is expressly cited. "Something like to it, says "*Jerom*, is to be met with in *Zachariab*; which, "though not differing much in sense, yet varies "greatly in the words, and in the order of them. "I have seen however, adds he, this very text "word for word, in an apocryphal book of *Jeremiah*, which a Jew lately shewed me: yet the "prophecy seems rather to have been taken "from *Zachariab* [4]." He was unwilling to

[1] *Hammond* in loc.

[2] *Heinfii Exercitat. Sacr.*
in loc.

[3] *Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.*

[4] Hoc testimonium in

Jeremiah non invenitur: in

Zachariab vero quædam similitudo fertur: & quan-

quam sensus non multum

discrepet, tamen & ordo & impute

impute here to *Matthew*, the practice of citing his prophetic testimonies from *apocryphal* books, which yet others, both among the ancients and moderns, have not scrupled to affirm likewise very freely of *St. Paul*, and the other Apostles [1]. It is observed by the Critics, that some few copies of the New Testament, in the early ages, had not the word *Jeremiab* in this text; which they suppose to have been omitted designedly by the Transcribers, for the sake of clearing *Matthew* from the imputation of a mistake: as *Austin* himself, from the consent of the best Greek copies, is forced to allow [2]; tho'

verba diversa sunt. Legitur se hoc testimonium invenisse in quodam Hebraico volumine, quod mihi Hebraeus obtulit, *Jeremiae Apocryphum*, in quo hæc ad verbum scripta reperi. Sed tamen mihi videtur magis de *Zacharia* sumptum testimonium. In *Matt.* xxvii. T. iv. p. 134.

[1] Ut omittam longas & varias inquisitiones, quibus hunc locum nonnulli interpretum involvunt, hoc mihi simplicissimum judicatur, ut dicamus Evangelistam ex *apocrypho* quodam *Jeremiae volumine* hoc desumpsisse testimonium, &c. Vid. Zeger. in *Matt.* xxvii. 9. Vid. it. Grotium in loc.

Zacharias, Chrysopolitanus Episcopus, p. 343. testa-

tur se hoc testimonium invenisse in *secretis Eliae Prophetæ*, qui liber est Apocryphus, non Canonicus. Eadem scribit Georgius Syncellus, cujus verba invenies apud Scaligerum in notis ad Eusebium, de Apostolo etiam Paulo libros Apocryphos citante. Drusius, in 1 Ep. ad Corinth. ii. 9. it. Zeger. ibid.—Vid. etiam de Christo Apocryphis utente. Orig. Comm. in *Matt.* p. 225. Edit. Huet.

[2] Vid. Millii Notas in loc. it. Grot. ibid.

Qui diligentius in Græcis Codicibus Evangelium consideraverunt, in antiquioribus Græcis ita se perhibent invenisse; cur autem de nonnullis Codicibus tolleretur,

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of all the primitive Fathers, he seems the most bigoted to the notion, *that the Evangelists could not err*. To heal this difficulty therefore, he gives us two solutions of his own invention, but both of them strangely absurd and ridiculous.

First; he says, "that *Matthew* was directed by "the Holy Spirit, to commit this mistake of "putting *Jeremiah* for *Zachariah*; which, upon "recollection, he would surely have corrected, "if he had not been convinced, that it was suggested by the secret counsil of Providence for "wise purposes. For since all the Prophets "were inspired by one and the same Spirit, and "had but one and the same view in their writings, people would see by this instance, that "it was wholly indifferent, which of them was "named or cited, for what was said by any of "them; and that the sayings of *Zachariah* were "as much *Jeremiah's* as *Zachariah's*, and so vice "versa; so that there was no occasion for *Matthew*, to correct this seeming blunder, when "he knew himself, at the time of making it, to "be under the direction of the Holy Ghost [1]."

2dly, He observes, "that there is an account "in *Jeremiah*, how the Prophet bought a field "of his uncle's son; not indeed for *thirty pieces* "of silver, for these are mentioned onely by *Za-*

audax imperitia fecit, cum
turbaretur questione, quod
hoc testimonium apud Jere-
miam non inveniretur. Au-

gust. de Conf. Evang. l. iii.
§ 29.

[1] Ibid. § 30.

chariah.

“ *chariab*, as the purchase of a field is mentioned only by *Jeremiab*: the reader therefore finding *Jeremiab* cited in the Gospel, and not finding in *Jeremiab*, the *thirty pieces of silver*, which are added by *Matthew*, might thence be admonished, that these also were applicable to *Jesus*, and so come at the sense of another prophecy, which was mystically related to him.” As to the rest of this text in *Matthew*; *the price of him, that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the Potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me*: “ It is not, as he says, to be found, either in *Zachariab* or *Jeremiab*, but was mystically and elegantly added by the *Evangelist*, who had learnt from Christ himself, that it related to *the thirty pieces of silver*, for which he was sold: for as the price of the field in *Jeremiab* is said, to have been put into an earthen vessel, so the price of *Jesus* was applied to the purchase of a Potter’s field [1].”

This explication was too extravagant, to be followed, as usual, by modern Commentators: who account therefore for this difficulty, by supposing either some inadvertency of the first transcribers, in putting *Jeremiab* for *Zachariab*; or a slip of memory in *Matthew* himself, or, what is more probable, that the passage was cited from that apocryphal book of *Jeremiab*, in which *St. Jerom* had read it word for word: which they shew, to have been the case likewise of many

[1] August. de Conf. Evan. l. iii. § 30.

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other passages of the New Testament [1]. *Jerom* indeed tells us, "that when we meet with any
 " citations made by the Apostles, as from the
 " Prophets, which cannot be found in the Old
 " Testament, we must not recur presently to
 " *the absurdities of apocryphal books*, but believe
 " them to be really written in the old Scrip-
 " tures, yet cited by the Apostles, not accord-
 " ing to the words, but to the meaning of
 " them; so that it cannot easily be discovered,
 " in what part of the Scriptures they are writ-
 " ten, except by the learned and studious [2]."
 And to say the truth; the learned may draw
 what senses they please out of any book what-
 soever, by the same method, with which they
 have made out the sense of the passages now
 before us.

[1] Aut enim culpa Scri-
 barum commutatum nomen
 aut memoriæ vitio. *Erasm.*
 in *Matt.* xxvii. 8.

Jeremiæ nomen irrepsisse
 videtur, vel culpa exscriben-
 tis, vel memoriæ vitio. *Dru-*
fius, *ibid.* Vid. it. *Bezam*,
Lightfoot.

Hoc mihi simplicissimum
 videtur, Evangelistam ex
Apocrypho quodam *Jeremiæ*
 volumine sumsisse testimo-
 nium, & idem quoque Apo-
 stolum Paulum fecisse. *Ze-*
ger. *ib.* Tale *Enochi* illud
 apud *Judam*. [14, 15] tale

illud [1 *Cor.* ii. 9.] *Grot.*
ibid.

[2] Hoc autem totum
 nunc idcirco observavimus,
 ut etiam in ceteris locis, sic
 ubi testimonia quasi de Pro-
 phetis, & de veteri Testa-
 mento ab Apostolis usurpata
 sunt, & in nostris Codicibus
 non habentur, nequaquam
 statim ad *Apocryphorum* in-
 eptias & deliramenta curra-
 mus; sed sciamus scripta ea
 quidem esse in Veteri Testa-
 mento, sed non ita ab Apo-
 stolis edita, &c. in *Epist.* ad
Ephes. Op. T. iv. p. 392.

Lastly,

Lastly, *Matthew* speaking of *Jesus* says; *He cast out Spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah, saying; Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses* [1]. *Erasmus* remarks here, "that, in the application of this prophecy, *Matthew* has wrested it a little to his own purpose [2]." It is taken from the liii^d chapter of *Isaiah*, where the Prophet is describing the character of a suffering *Messiah*, who was to take our sins upon him, and give himself up to death for the expiation of them: to which sense *Jesus* himself often alludes, declaring, *That he came to give his life a ransom for many, and that his blood was shed for many, for the remission of sins* [3]. And to this sense all the other Apostles constantly apply it; telling us; how *Jesus* bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree; was offered for the sins of many; was the Lamb slain, and propitiation made for the sins of the whole world [4]. But what the Prophet had foretold of a *Messiah*, taking upon himself our sins, the Evangelist applies to *Jesus*, as taking away our bodily diseases: an interpretation, wholly foreign to the meaning of the prophecy; peculiar to *Matthew*; and no where confirmed by any other of the sacred writers.

[1] *Matt.* viii. 16, 17.

[3] *Matt.* xx. 28. xxvi. 28.

[2] *Adduxit hoc testimonium Matthæus, nonnihil ad suum deflectens negotium.* *Erasm.* in loc.

[4] *Heb.* ix. 28. *Rom.* iii. 25. *1 Pet.* ii. 24. *1 Joh.* ii. 2, &c.

These

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These instances are sufficient for the use, which I propose to make of them.

As to the first ; the best solution, which has been given of it, is ; “ that either *Matthew's* “ memory failed him in the recital of it ; or that “ he cited it imperfectly and inaccurately on- “ purpose, to reprove the Scribes and Pharisees “ for the same loose and negligent method of “ interpreting the Scriptures, in which they “ freely indulged themselves.”

The second, as all the Interpreters agree, is not to be found in any part of the Old Testament : and the whole, which is said for it, is, “ that in some sense or other, it may be collect- “ ed from several different expressions of dif- “ ferent Prophets, joined and tacked together ; “ and so made to suit, by way of *accommoda- “ tion* [1], as Dr. *Hammond* says, with some “ particular circumstance of *Jesus's* life.

The third was taken, in all probability, from a spurious and *apocryphal book*, of no authority, falsely ascribed to the Prophet *Jeremiah*, in which it was read by *St. Jerom*, and never found in any other [2].

The fourth is manifestly strained by *Matthew* to a sense, totally different from that of the Prophet, as it is explained by all the other sacred writers.

[1] Hamm. on Matt. ii. in his enim et si invenitur ali-
23. qua veritas, tamen propter

[2] Omittamus earum multa falsa, nulla est Cano-
Scripturarum fabulas, quæ nica Auctoritas. August. de
apocryphæ nuncupantur — Civ. D. l. xv. c. 23.

But

But as in these instances, we find *Matthew* accommodating the sense of Prophecies, to an agreement with the facts of his Gospel, so, on the other hand, we find him also accommodating his facts, to the sense of the prophecies. For example; He tells us, that *Jesus*, preparing to make a solemn entry into *Jerusalem*, ordered *two* of his Disciples, to go and bring to him an *Ass* and a *Colt* with her, which they would find tied together in a certain village: and they went, as *Jesus* commanded them, and brought the *Ass* and the *Colt*, and put on them their cloaths and set him thereon. All this was done, says he, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Prophet, saying; Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee meek, sitting upon an *Ass* and a *Colt*, the foal of an *Ass* [1]. The Commentators are puzzled here to determine, on which of the two *Jesus* rode; whether on the *Ass*, or the *Colt*; while the letter of the text seems to declare, that he sat upon them both; as some of the Antients, and of the moderns also have interpreted it; who solve the seeming absurdity, by supposing, that he first mounted the one, and then the other: the *Ass* denoting the Jewish, and the *Foal*, the Gentile Church; of both which he was now become the common Head [2]. But all this

[1] Matt. xxi. 5. Zach,
ix. 9.

[2] Ad quod quæri utri
Dominus jumento infederit,
pullone an asinæ: alii ipsum

utrique, prius uni deinde al-
teri infedissee respondent: at-
que in hac sententia est Au-
gustinus de Conf. Evang.
l. ii. c. 66. Alii de pullo

difficulty

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difficulty will vanish at once, if we take the account of this same fact, as it is given by the other Evangelists; who expressly say; that it was *the Foal* or *the Colt* onely, which *Jesus* sent for and rode upon: which is the most probable, as well from the nature of the thing, as from the concurrent testimony of three against one. But it is remarkable, that as *John* relates the same fact differently from *Matthew*, so he cites the same prophecy also as differently: and as, in his Gospel, he speaks of no more than *the Colt*, so in the prophecy he drops the mention of *the Ass*, and takes no more, than what relates to *the Colt* [1]. Whence it appears, that as *Matthew* adapted his fact to the letter of the prophecy, so *John* accommodated the letter of the prophecy to the reality of the fact.

The late Dr. *Rogers*, treating this very question, in one of his Sermons, affirms *the inspiration of the Apostles* to be a fundamental point in it: and, upon that hypothesis, gives two general solutions of all the objections, which are made to the application of these prophecies in the New Testament. 1st, “ That such applications of them, though groundless or false in themselves, yet being such, as were commonly received, and passed for current among the

duntaxat — & quod hic de utroque dicitur animante, ad Allegoriam transmittendum autumant, populi Judaici & populi Gentilis. Zeger: in

Matt. v. it. Casaub. in Matt. v. 7. it. Origen. Edit. Huet. p. 430. E.

[1] John xii. 15.

“ Jews,

“Jews, might properly be urged to them by persons inspired, as arguments *ad hominem*, upon their own concessions, without any impeachment of their inspiration. 2dly, To bring the matter, as he says, to a short issue, he affirms, that all such applications must necessarily be true, because they were made by *persons inspired* [1].” The absurdity of which reasoning shews, to what contemptible shifts the most plausible writers will be reduced, when intangled with the defence of Systems, which are contradictory to plain facts.

When Jesus opened to the Jews these evidences of his mission, from their own Prophets, he admonished them to *search the Scriptures*, for the proof and trial of the truth of what he alleged [2]. The Apostles did the same; constantly exhorting them, to examine the Old Testament, that they might see, whether the testimonies, to which they appealed, were so or not: and the people of *Berea* are particularly commended, for *searching the Scriptures more diligently, than the rest of the Jewish Converts* [3]. Now there could be no other meaning in this appeal to the Scriptures, on the one side, and this search of them, on the other, but to try, whether the particular testimonies, referred to by the Apostles, were really to be found in them, and in that very sense, to which they were applied. This is the foundation, on which Christ and his Apostles

[1] Rogers Serm. p. 121. and p. 127.

[2] John v.

39.

[3] Acts xvii. 11.

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put the decision of this question : and it is the sole foundation, on which the Jews could rationally be convinced and converted to the faith of the Gospel. To affirm then, as the Doctor abovementioned has done, *that the Inspiration of the Apostles*, is the fundamental point, on which it depends, is in effect, to teach the contrary, to what Christ and his Apostles had taught ; “ that
 “ we need not trouble ourselves on this occasion
 “ with searching the Scriptures ; and that the
 “ search of them is fruitless ; for though the
 “ passages, referred to by the Evangelists, should
 “ not be found in them, which is the case of
 “ some, or found in a sense quite different from
 “ that, to which they are applied, which is the
 “ case of others, yet we must receive them all as
 “ infallibly true, because they are delivered by
 “ persons inspired.”

But to speak a word or two to each of his solutions. As to the first, it is utterly incredible, that persons inspired and specially commissioned by God, to propagate a particular doctrine, and supplied consequently with proofs the most authentic and demonstrative of its truth, could on any account be reduced, to make use of trifling or equivocal arguments for the support of it ; much less of such, as are false and groundless. Yet if this should in any manner be thought probable, in an occasional conference or debate with private persons, who had been trained and accustomed to that sort of reasoning, it is surely inconsistent with any notion of inspiration, to
 publish

publish such arguments in writing, to all the world, and to all posterity, as the standing and perpetual proofs of the Christian doctrine, which they knew in reality to be no proofs at all, except to a few particular Jews, of those very times ; and which, instead of doing service to religion, could serve only for matter of doubt and cavil to all succeeding times.

As to his second solution ; if we should ask, how it appears, that the Apostles were actually inspired, in their interpretations of these prophecies ? it will be answered, I suppose, because they *wrought miracles* [1]. And so far indeed I agree, that in the act of working miracles, they were certainly inspired with an extraordinary power ; but when that act was over, and the special purpose of those miracles served, it is reasonable to believe, from the evidence of those facts, which I have elsewhere set forth, that they returned to the condition of fallible men.

Peter wrought many miracles, yet was charged afterwards by Paul, with acting in contradiction to the truth of the Gospel [2]. *Paul wrought as many, yet in some cases disclaims any inspiration* [3]. *Barnabas* also wrought miracles, yet *Paul* and he quarrelled so far, as to part in great wrath from each other, about *Mark, the Evangelist*, whom *Paul* looked upon as a Desertor ; *Barnabas*, as an honest man : where one of them

[1] Rogers's Serm. 128. [2] Galat. ii. 14. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 12, 25. 2 Cor. xi. 17. Gal. iii. 15.

was

was surely mistaken, and both of them probably to be blamed, [1].

If the Apostles indeed had called the Jews together, and wrought a miracle before them, in confirmation of any particular interpretation of Scripture, this reasoning would be just, and the miracle rightly alledged for the truth of such interpretation: but since this was not the case, the inference is certainly groundless, that miracles wrought at one time, prove the workers of them, to have been infallible at all times. Nay the power of working miracles is so far from proving those, who are indued with it, to be perpetually inspired, or specially favored by God, that it does not prove them even to be good or honest men: since according to the constant testimony of the most esteemed and orthodox of the Primitive Fathers, it was possessed sometimes by *wicked men, and Heretical Christians*, corrupt both in faith and manners [2].

Let us now see, what use the enemies of Christianity have endeavoured to make of the prophecies applied by the Evangelists in the manner above specified; and what answer the

[1] Acts xv. 39.

[2] Ut intelligamus, quædam miracula etiam Sceleratos homines facere, qualia Sancti facere non possunt.—

Quapropter aliter Magi faciunt miracula; aliter boni Christiani; aliter mali Christiani. August. Op. T.

vi. p. 71.

Hoc adversus Hæreticos, qui probationem fidei suæ ex eo, si signum aliquod fecerint, arbitrantur. Hier. T. iv. p. 252. Vid. it. Chrys. T. iii. p. 64. D. it. T. vii. p. 376. D. Edit. Bened.

truth

truth of the case will oblige us to give to them. The Author of a *Discourse on the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, asserts, "that
 " the foundation of it is laid by the Evangelists,
 " on the proof of this point, *that the mission and*
 " *character of Jesus were foretold by the Prophets;*
 " and that the validity of this proof depends
 " intirely on the force of those particular pro-
 " phecies which the same Evangelists have ap-
 " plied to the illustration of it, in their several
 " Gospels [1]." Upon this hypothesis, he un-
 " dertakes to shew, " that the Prophecies, so ap-
 " plied by them, do not at all relate to *Jesus*, in
 " their proper and literal signification, but onely
 " in a secondary, typical and figurative sense:
 " and then by exposing this way of interpreting
 " them, as equivocal, precarious, and incapa-
 " ble of yielding any rational conviction, he
 " imagines that he has done, what he aimed at,
 " and overturned the foundation of the Christian
 " religion."

And in truth, if we admit, that Christianity has no other foundation than what he has assigned to it, it might not perhaps be difficult for him to make good the rest: for upon that supposition, he has thrown many objections in our way, which it is scarce possible to get clear of. But while he fancied himself to be demolishing foundations, he was battering onely such parts of the edifice, as serve for its ornament, rather than

[1] See *Discourse on the Christian Religion*, p. 4, 5,
 Grounds and Reasons of the 26, 27.

its support. He professes to shew, that the *Prophecies cited by Matthew*, relate to *Jesus* onely in a figurative sense; and if he had shewn, that some of them did not relate to him in any sense at all, he would have done no more, than what some of the primitive Fathers, as well as modern Critics had done before him, without designing or doing the least hurt to Christianity.

Jesus, as it is said above, declared in general, *that Moses and the Prophets had testified of him*: but since the Evangelists did not think it necessary to give a precise account, or deduction of the several prophecies, which were alledged by him in proof of that declaration; it is sufficient to take it, just as we find it; as being true in general; without thinking ourselves obliged to defend all the particular instances and applications, which were offered afterwards in support of it, by fallible men. It is *Jesus* onely, who is called *the Truth*; and who alone was incapable of error: but *he suffered his Apostles*, as *Erasmus* says, *to be drawn sometimes into mistakes, by a wrong judgement or affection*, &c. [1]. These then being full of zeal for this new doctrine, taught them in general by their Master, yet wanting his unerring spirit, may probably be supposed, from an eagerness of explaining and illustrating it, to have strained it in some cases farther than it would bear; in the same manner,

[1] Passus est suos ignorare quædam & labi, erroreque alicubi judicio sine affectu. In Matth. ii. 6.

as their Successors continued also to do more remarkably in the following ages; who, full of the same zeal, yet without the same knowledge, stretched this argument of prophecy still farther, and discovered, as they imagined, many more instances of it applicable to *Jesus*, than ever the Evangelists and Apostles had dreamt of.

This therefore may serve for a general answer to all the objections, which are made *to the prophecies of the Old Testament, as they are cited and said to be fulfilled in the New*: that we are not obliged to receive all such applications of them, as infallible; that Christianity does not depend upon it; that whoever shall attack it on this article, will labor onely in vain, unless he can shew; that the *mission and character of Jesus* were not; in any manner or sense at all, prefigured in the Old Testament, or that *Moses and the Prophets had no where testified of him*. This is the single point, which can affect or hurt the cause of Christianity, and all the cavils, which fall short of this, may justly be slighted, as of no real weight in this question.

Mr. *Whiston* in defending *The Literal Accomplishment of the Scripture-prophecies*, against the Author of *The Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, has produced *forty-five prophecies* from the Old Testament, which are all cited in the New, in proof of *the Messiahship of Jesus*, and which he declares to have been *clearly and directly fulfilled, without the least pretence of any reply from*

A a 2

that

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that Author or any other whatsoever [1]. Now if any number of these, how small soever, are found to be as clearly accomplished, as he takes them to be, they are sufficient to support the authority of the Gospel, though all the rest were thrown aside.

But to say the truth, the grounds of our faith, in these *later ages of the Church*, do not lie in the particular interpretations of prophecies, made by men, who might be mistaken, and who, as *Jerom* says more than once, *by trusting to their memories, in citing these very prophecies, were frequently mistaken in the words; and sometimes in the sense of them* [2]. Nor is the evidence of prophecy so proper, in these days, *to convert men to the faith of Christ, as to confirm those, who have already embraced it* [3]: Serving chiefly, as *St. Paul* ex-

[1] See The Literal Accomplishment of Script. Proph. &c. p. 1—19. See also The Supplement, &c. p. 1, 2.

[2] Sunt autem qui afferunt; in omnibus pene testimoniis, quæ de Veteri Testamento sumuntur, istiusmodi esse errorem, ut aut ordo mutetur aut verba; & interdum sensus quoque diversus sit: vel Apostolis, vel Evangelistis non ex libro carpentibus testimonia, sed memoriæ credentibus, quæ nonnunquam fallitur. Hieron. in

Micah. c. v. Op. T. iii. p. 1531.

Hoc autem in omnibus pene testimoniis, quæ de veteribus libris in novo assumta sunt Testamento, observare debemus: quod memoriæ crediderint Evangelistæ vel Apostoli; & tantum sensu explicato sæpe ordinem commutaverint; nonnunquam vel detraxerint verba vel addiderint. Id. in Ep. ad Galat. c. iii. Op. T. iv. p. 253.

[3] Qualia in Prophetis multa, apta non ad convin-

presses it, *not to them, who believed not, but to them, who believe* [1].

Upon the first promulgation of the Gospel, while the conversion of the Jews was the principal object of our Savior's ministry, and afterwards of his Apostles, the argument of prophecy was, of all others, the best adapted to persuade and conquer the prejudices of that nation. But in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, not acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures, nor tinctured with any Jewish prejudices, the testimony of its miracles, and the purity of its doctrines, were the most affecting proofs of its divine origin. Yet when by the evidence of these, people had once received the Christian faith, and acquired a competent knowledge of it, they would then perceive, that the argument of prophecy, was a part also of the evidence, essentially necessary to complete the demonstration of its truth. And on this foundation *Grotius* has built the best Apology for it, which has ever been published perhaps since the times of the Apostles.

To conclude; the chief purpose of these inquiries, is, to shew, that Christianity cannot be defended to the satisfaction of speculative and thinking men, but by reducing it to its original simplicity, and stripping it of the false glosses, and systems, with which it has been incumbered, through the prejudices of the pious, as well as the arts of the crafty and the interested. One

ceperis incredulos, sed ad Grot. Vot. pro pace. p. 104.
confermandos, qui credidit. [1] 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

of the principal of these incumbrances, as far as I am able to judge, is the notion, which is generally inculcated by our Divines, concerning *the perpetual inspiration and infallibility of the Apostles and Evangelists*: a notion, which has imported such difficulties and perplexities into the system of the Christian religion, as all the wit of man has not been able to explaine: which yet will all be easily solved, and vanish at once, by admitting onely the contrary notion, *that the Apostles were fallible*: which is a sort of proof that generally passes with men of sense for demonstrative; being of the same kind, by which *Sir Isaac Newton* has convinced the world, of the truth of his philosophical principles.

For this great Philosopher, by considering the real effects and productions of nature, and applying the causes of those, which were within the reach of sense and experiment, to all other phænomena of a similar kind, more distant and remote from the same trial, arrived at last, by a chain of consequences, at the discovery of that universal principle, by which the beautiful order of this visible world is regulated, and all the particular motions and activities of its constituent parts perpetually directed; which in every other hypothesis, had been perplexed with insuperable difficulties. *Descartes* took the contrary method: he first conceived the Idea of his universal principle, and by the force of his great wit and comprehension, made it correspond so aptly with the principal phænomena

mena of nature, that it was received with great applause by the learned. But when it came to be examined afterwards with rigor, and was found irreconcilable to fact and experience, it gradually lost ground, and is now generally rejected by men of Science.

The case is the same in Theological, as in natural inquiries: it is experience alone, and the observation of facts, which can illustrate the truth of principles. Facts are stubborn things, deriving their existence from nature, and tho' frequently misrepresented and disguised by art and false colors, yet cannot be totally changed, or made pliable to the Systems, which happen to be in fashion; but, sooner or later, will always reduce the opinions of men, to a compliance and conformity with themselves.

Wherefore, as we learn from daily experience that prejudice, passion, want of memory, knowledge or judgement naturally produce obscurity, inaccuracy and mistakes in all modern writings whatsoever; so when we see the same effects in antient writings, how sacred soever they may be deemed, we must necessarily impute them to the same causes. This is what sense and reason prescribe, and what will be found at last the onely way of solving all the difficulties above intimated: whereas our Theorists, who come provided with systems which they impose as the Catholic rule, by which the Christian doctrine must be explained, are driven to such miserable shifts and absurdities, in their attempts to accommo-

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date that rule to the particular facts of the Gospel, that, instead of clearing it of its difficulties, they never fail to obscure and perplex it still more, till they render it incompatible with any consistent and rational belief.

A N

A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
G I F T O F T O N G U E S .

T E N D I N G

**To explain the proper notion and nature
of it, as it is described and delivered
to us in the Sacred Scriptures ;**

A N D

**As it appears also to have been understood by the
Learned both of the ancient and modern times.**

A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
G I F T O F T O N G U E S.

THE gift of tongues, of which I am now going to treat, was first conferred by Christ on his Apostles, about ten days after his Ascension, in a public and solemn assembly of all the Disciples in *Jerusalem*, on the feast of *Pentecost*; as the account of it is delivered to us by *St. Luke*, in the following words:

Acts ii.

1. *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*
2. *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*
3. *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*
4. *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*
5. *And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*
6. *Now*

6. *Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.*
7. *And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these, who speak, Galileans?*
8. *And how hear we, every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*
9. *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,*
10. *Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Ægypt, and in the parts of Libya, about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes,*
11. *Cretes and Arabians; we do hear them speak in our tongues, the wonderful works of God.*
12. *And they were all amazed and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*
13. *Others mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.*

From this narrative of the original collation of this miraculous gift of tongues, we find it to have been transacted in the same manner, which God is said to have used on other occasions, whenever he thought fit to strike the minds of men with an awful sense of his immediate presence. That is, by some extraordinary noise, as *of a wind violently rushing*, and shaking the place, and the appearance also of fire, or flame suddenly flashing, to the amazement of those who beheld it. “The manner of exhibiting this
“ gift,

“ gift, says Dr. Lightfoot, was in *tongues of fire*,
 “ that the giving of the Holy Ghost, at the in-
 “ itiating of the Christian Church, might an-
 “ swer the giving of the Law, at the initiating
 “ of the Jewish : and so it did, both in time
 “ and manner ; that being given at *the feast of*
 “ *Pentecost*, and in an appearance of fire, and so
 “ likewise this.” But what is peculiar to the
 case before us, is, that this fire is said to have
 assumed the *shape of cloven tongues*, and to have
 sitten some time in that form, on the heads of
 the Apostles. Hence we see, how the Painters,
 in all their descriptions of this story, have fixed
 upon the head of each Apostle, a *flame of fire*,
 split and divided into some resemblance of a
 cloven tongue. Yet that, which is mentioned
 in the text to have sitten upon each of them, is
 interpreted by some Critics, to relate, not, as it
 is commonly understood, to *the figure of a*
cloven tongue, which appeared like to fire, but
 to the Spirit itself, with which they were then
 inspired, and which accordingly sat, or resided
 upon them for some time [1]. And this indeed

[1] And there appeared “ of the Apostles, when it is
 unto them *cloven tongues*, “ spoken of *the Spirit* which
 like as of fire : and it sat up- “ sat upon them. Their
 on each of them ; v. 3. which “ tongues also are said to
 is thus interpreted by an e- “ have been cloven and fiery,
 minent Critic, *Laurentius Val-* “ as it were, to denote that
la, in his Comment on the “ variety of languages, with
 place. “ They are mistaken, “ which they were indued ;
 “ says he, who take the fire “ not that any *fiery tongues* re-
 “ to have rested on the heads “ ally sat on their heads, as

seems

seems very probable : for though the passage itself may appear at first sight to carry a different sense, yet, by considering all its circumstances, we cannot reasonably collect any thing more from it, than that a fire from heaven flashed suddenly into the room, and filled it with an extraordinary light, which, like all other Phænomena of that sort, no sooner appeared than vanished. For when, upon the rumor of this miracle, all the several nations, who dwelt at *Jerusalem*, flocked in crouds to the place, to inform themselves of the truth of it : if the forms of *cloven tongues* had continued to sit on the heads of the Apostles, that would have been the first thing which must have struck them with wonder and surprize : but it is evident from the text, that the multitude saw no appearance of that kind : for though they are said to have been greatly amazed, it was not at what they saw, but what they heard ; viz. *a number of illiterate men, born in the midst of Galilee, addressing themselves freely to each different nation, in its own proper language.*

The same inference may be drawn also from the effect, which this miracle had upon the natives of *Jerusalem* ; who, not understanding the

“ some will have it.” [Vid. eund. ad loc.] St. *Jerom* also “ room was filled, in which
seems to allude to the same “ they were sitting, and the
interpretation : “ They were “ fire of the Spirit found its
“ baptized, says he, so ef- “ wished for residence in
“ effectually by the Holy “ them, and divided their
“ Ghost, that the whole “ tongues.” Op. T. iv. par. i.
p. 178. Edit. Bened.

strange

strange languages; which the Apostles were severally speaking, imagined them presently to be drunk, and uttering some senseless jargon of their own, which wine onely had inspired; a notion, which they could not easily have entertained, if they had seen this cœlestial fire sitting at the same time on their heads: since so conspicuous a prodigy must needs have suggested a different reflection, and obliged them to acknowledge the finger of God in it. We cannot however think it strange, that fire flashing from heaven, and suddenly vanishing, should yield some resemblance of *tongues* to the eyes of the multitude: for this is no more than what is natural, and what we may observe, in some measure, from every flame that flashes from the clouds; and breaks itself of course, into a number of small and pointed particles, not remote from that shape. Hence, in the *Hebrew* language, we find the *flame, or fire, that devour-eth the stubble*, called by *Isaiab*, the *tongue of fire*. Where the Critics observe, *that a flame is so called by the Prophet, on the account of its likeness to a tongue, both in its color and shape; as being red, and tending towards a point* [1]. So that the *cloven tongues* in the text, are to be considered as a mere *Hebraism*, not properly translated, which signifies nothing more, than a *flame of fire burst*

[1] שֵׁן אֵשׁ—Sicut stipulam devorat *lingua ignis*. [Vulg. Isa. v. 24.] i. e. *Flamma*: quod ea linguæ spe-

ciem præ se fert: nam rabet, & in acutiem tendit. Vatab. in locum.

into

into the room, whose braken and divided particles flashed over the heads of the Apostles, in the form, as it were, of fiery tongues [1]. But from all the circumstances already mentioned, it seems reasonable to suppose, that the fire itself, as soon as it had illuminated the room, in such a manner, as to indicate something miraculous and supernatural in it, immediately vanished, as well as *the rushing wind*, with which it was accompanied.

As to the nature of the gift, which was conferred in this extraordinary manner, it was a faculty of speaking *new and strange languages*, infused instantaneously by God into the Apostles, in order to convince all those different nations, then residing in *Jerusalem*, that they were authorised and commissioned by a divine power, to preach the Gospel of *Jesus*. But though they were all equally indued with the same faculty, and are all said to have given proofs of it in this same assembly; we are not to imagine that they all spoke together, or at the same time, for that could onely create confusion; but that one or two of them perhaps addressed themselves by turns, to different parts of the company, and expounded to each in their own tongue, *the wonderful works of God*: according to that rule, prescribed afterwards by *St. Paul*, for the exercise of this very gift in all public assemblies,

[1] Διαμνηστικῶς φλόγας αἰὲρ πυρρός. Acts ii. 3. Vid. Heinſii Exercit. ad loc.

that

that those, who possessed it, *should speak singly, and in their proper course, one after another* [1].

St. Paul, who, as he himself tells us, was indued with this gift in its fullest measure, and the best acquainted therefore with its true value, ranks it in the lowest class of spiritual gifts; and as a thing of little or no worth: bestowed sometimes on persons, who do not seem to have understood the very languages which they spoke, but wanted *an interpreter*, to explain their own words to them: and he censures that zeal, which the Christians of those days expressed for it, as a *childish affection*, which prompted them to prefer what was strange and surprizing, to what was useful and edifying [2].

But the principal end and proper use of this gift, was to serve, on some solemn occasions, as a *sensible proof and illustrious sign*, that a divine influence rested on those, who were indued with it. Thus our Saviour, when he gave the first promise of it to his disciples, says, *these signs shall accompany those who believe—they shall speak with new tongues, &c* [3]. And St. Paul declares, that *tongues were given for a sign, not to those who believe, but to those who believe not* [4]. Which sign, as soon as it had served that parti-

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 27.

[2] "He, that speaketh in a strange tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him.—Wherefore

"let him, who speaketh in a strange tongue, pray, that he may interpret." Ib. ver. 2, 13, 14, &c. it. c. xii. 10, 28.

[3] Mark xvi. 17.

[4] 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

cular purpose, for which it was given, seems to have ceased and totally vanished.

There are two or three other passages in the *Acts*, which have some relation to this which I am now considering: for when the disciples in *Jerusalem* were assembled together with *Peter* and *John*, and praying earnestly to God, to grant them courage *to preach the word with boldness, and to perform signs and wonders in the name of Jesus*, we read, that their prayer was no sooner finished, *than the place was shaken in which they were assembled*; as a divine signal, and sure token, that their prayer was accepted. Thus also, when *Paul* and *Silas* were praying to God in prison, *there was suddenly a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and its doors opened, and every one's bands were loosed* [1]. We may learn likewise from the Old Testament, that it was usual with God, even under the Jewish dispensation, to employ these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, as *pledges* or

[1] *Acts* iv. 31. xvi. 26.

Grotius here observes, that these extraordinary movements were given, as signs of God's powerful interposition, and of some great thing to follow.

[Vid. eund. ad loc.] And *Wolfius* also remarks, how the Gentiles were possessed with the same notion, that the presence of God was usually signified by some vehement motion or concussion of

the air and earth. [Vid. Com. ad loc.]

*Constat Aventinæ tremuisse
cacumina Sylvæ,*

*Terraque subfedit, pondere
pressa Jovis.*

The earth shook, says the Psalmist, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God, even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

signs,

signs, either to insure the performance of some promise, or to demonstrate the collation of some benefit.—Thus *Samuel*, when he anointed *Saul* to be King over *Israel*, informs him of *three signs*, which would be given to him, as a proof that the Kingdom was destined to him by God: the third of which is, *that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him, and he should prophesy, and be turned into another man*: and when these signs, says he, *shall come upon thee, then do as occasion shall serve thee, for God is with thee* [1]. Thus also, when *Moses* chose *seventy Elders* out of the people, to assist him in the administration of the government, *God transferred his Spirit from Moses unto those seventy*, as a sign or token, both to them and to the people, that they were selected to this office by divine appointment: and it came to pass, *that while the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease* [2]. Hence flow those expressions, which we often meet with in *St. Paul*, of *the seal, the earnest, the witness of the Spirit*, given in the hearts of the believers [3]; as a sure pledge of God's peculiar favor. For, as *the seal of a ring*, says *Grotius*, *impressed on a bond, renders the whole firm and unquestionable, so the seal of God's spirit, impressed on men's hearts, leaves no room to doubt of his paternal love of them* [4].

I find but two other passages in the New

[1] 1 Sam. x. 2, 8. [2] Numb. xi. 25. [3] 2 Cor. i. 22. v. 5. Eph. i. 13, 14. Rom. viii. 16. [4] Vid. Grot. in Ephes. i. 13.

Testament, where we have any particular account of the collation of this *gift of tongues*; which, in both of them, appears to have been conferred for no other purpose, than what I have already intimated, to signify to the company then assembled, the immediate presence and interposition of the Deity. For example; in the first of them, we read, that when St. *Peter*, by the command of God, had instructed *Cornelius* and his family, in the grounds of the Christian faith, *the Holy Ghost fell upon all who heard him, and they spake with tongues*. But of what service could a *variety of languages* possibly be, among a few persons of the same family, and probably of the same tongue, unless it were, to give a fresh proof to *Peter*, by this effect of his ministry, how powerfully he was supported by the divine assistance; and to shew the Gentile proselytes, that they were now admitted to a participation of the same privileges with the Jews, and to convince the Jewish converts at the same time, who accompanied *Peter* from *Joppa*, of their errors and prejudices, with regard to their ancient rites; and that these extraordinary favors of heaven were no longer limited to the circumcised only, or to the seed of *Abraham*, but were now laid open and imparted in common to all nations: for, as the text informs us, *they of the circumcision, who believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because, that on the Gentiles also was poured out the Gift of the Holy Ghost, for they*

they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God [1].

In the other passage we are told, “ how St. Paul happened to meet with certain Disciples at *Ephesus*, who had not received any other baptism but that of *John*, nor ever heard of any *Holy Ghost*; whereupon he baptized them in the name of *Jesus*; and having laid his hands upon them, *the Holy Ghost came on them* and *they spake with tongues* [2].” Now these were but *twelve* in number, all probably of the same country and language, as well as of the same faith: so that the gift of tongues could not be of any other benefit on this occasion, than to give a testimony to St. Paul, as well as to the men themselves, that the act, which they had been performing, was well pleasing to God.

St. *Austin* says, “ that when Christ, after his Ascension, sent down the Holy Spirit which he had promised, *the most eminent and necessary sign* of his actual descent upon the Disciples was, that *every one of them should speak in the tongues of all nations* [3].” St. *Chrysostom* also taking occasion to inquire into the meaning of *the kinds, or diversities of tongues*, which are mentioned so often by St. Paul, interprets it in the

[1] Acts x. 45; 46.

[2] Ibid. xix. 6.

[3] Cujus venientis in eos, qui crediderant, tunc signum erat maximum & maxime

necessarium, ut unusquisque eorum linguis omnium gentium loqueretur. De Civ. D. 1. xviii. c. 50.

same manner, and to the same sense. “ Antient-
 “ ly, says he, every one who believed and was
 “ baptized, spoke presently with divers tongues,
 “ for the sake of manifesting the Spirit within
 “ him. For as the men of those days were in-
 “ firm in the faith, and the spiritual gifts not
 “ discernible to the eyes of the flesh, so a sensible
 “ gift was bestowed upon them, that the spiri-
 “ tual might be made manifest : wherefore he,
 “ who was baptized, was enabled to speak, not
 “ only in our tongue, but in that of *the Per-*
 “ *sians* ; in that of the *Indians* ; and in that of
 “ the *Scythians* ; to the intent, that the unbe-
 “ lievers might learn, that he was indued with
 “ the Holy Ghost. This was a *sensible sign*, as
 “ it was heard by their bodily ears : and this
 “ *sensible sign* made the invisible grace of the
 “ Spirit evident to all : and this *sign* was called,
 “ *the kinds of tongues* [1].

Hence the learned *Dodwell* declares, “ that
 “ the Holy Ghost was generally bestowed on
 “ the new converts, at the time of their bap-
 “ tism, by some visible and external sign, called
 “ the *manifestation of the Spirit* ; by which the
 “ unbelievers themselves were assured beyond
 “ all doubt of the reality of the gift.” In the
 number of which external signs, he reckons a
lambent flame, and *the gift of tongues* [2]. But

[1] Vid. Chrysost. Oper. externo aliquo signo se ma-
 T. iii. p. 76. Edit. Benedict. nifestavit : quam Spiritus pa-

[2] Spiritus ita baptizatis *ἱερωσιν*, appellabant— ita ut
 ut plurimum collatus erat, ut de Spiritus dono ne quid ipsi
 according

according to Dr. *Lightfoot*, these spiritual gifts or signs were not bestowed on all promiscuously, who were baptized, but on a certain number only, whom the Apostles were directed by the Holy Ghost to lay their hands upon, and whom God had appointed to be Preachers.

It is evident then, from the facts and testimonies already alledged, that the chief, or sole end rather of this *gift of tongues*, was, to serve as a *sensible sign* in that infirm state of the first Christians, that those, to whom it was vouchsafed, were under a divine influence, and acting by a divine commission. And this indeed may be collected from the account, recited above, of the first communication of it to the Apostles. For in such an assembly, as is there described, composed of several different nations, it is not reasonable to think, that this *diversity of tongues* was given to the Apostles, for the sake of converting those nations, by the mere force of such discourses, as they were inabled to make to each in their own tongue: for that would have required more time, than the nature of such a meeting could allow; nor could any speeches of that sort, made successively to different parts of the company, in different languages, be proper to persuade the whole, but to confound ra-

dubitare possint infideles. — tinuisse donum illud lingua-
Dissert. in Iren. ii. p. 205. rum, fidemque eo argumento
 In hoc signorum numero, factam apud illos, qui non
 ignis lambens. *Ib. p. 106.* ante credidissent. *Ib. p. 110.*
 Ad Spiritus *φανέρωσις* per-

ther and perplex them. For if we suppose the Apostles, to have made each a separate discourse; to the *Parthians* for instance, in the *Parthian*; to the *Ægyptians*, in the *Ægyptian*; or to the *Romans*, in the *Latin* tongue; it is certain, that the greatest part of the Assembly, who did not understand those languages, would remain all that while amazed, and unedified; and this gift of tongues, if it had not been accompanied by some other power more persuasive and efficacious, would have exposed the possessors of it to ridicule onely and contempt; agreeably to what St. *Paul* declares to the *Corinthians*, *If the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say, that ye are mad [1]?*

Now all this is actually verified by the story before us; in which we find, that, as long as the Apostles were displaying this miraculous faculty, the greatest part of the company, who heard them by turns, speaking in their own languages, were struck with amazement, to perceive a set of rude *Galileans*, so learned and accomplished of a sudden, with all this variety of strange tongues; and *they were all in doubt, and asked one another, what could be the meaning of it*: while the rest, who understood nothing of any of those tongues, took all, which the Apostles were uttering, for the mere effect of drunkenness; till *Peter* observing, that their new

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

gift

gift had wrought its proper effect, by imprinting a general persuasion of something very wonderful in it, and raising an impatience in the company to expect the event, rose up, and putting an end to all that diversity and dissonance of languages, began to expound to them, in an affecting and continued discourse, and in a tongue, which they all understood, how “ what “ they had just seen and heard, was not the effect “ of wine and drunkenness, but of the wise “ counsel and power of God, who had now fulfilled the ancient predictions of his holy Prophets, concerning the character of the Messiah, and the nature of his kingdom ; which “ were all verified by the death, the resurrection, “ and the ascension of that same *Jesus*, whom “ they had crucified [1].” By the power of which speech, he added about *three thousand souls* at once to the number of the faithful ; and exemplified the truth of what *St. Paul* has also testified, that it is better to *“ speak five words in the Church with understanding, so as to instruct others by them, than ten thousand in an unknown tongue [2].*

This account of *the gift of tongues*, drawn from the clear testimonies of Scripture, plainly shews ; that it was not of a stable or permanent nature, but adapted to peculiar occasions, and then withdrawn again, as soon as it had served the particular purpose, for which it was bestowed. And hence we see the vanity of that notion,

[1] Acts ii. 14,—41.

[2] 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

which

which is generally entertained about it, that from the first communication of it to the Apostles, it adhered to them constantly as long as they lived, so as to enable them to preach the Gospel to every nation, through which they travelled, in its own proper tongue. A notion, for which I cannot find the least ground in any part of sacred writ, but many solid reasons to evince the contrary. Agreeably to which the learned *Salmasius*, speaking of this same miracle, says, “ we are not to infer from it, that the “ Apostles, by receiving the gift of tongues, received a faculty of speaking all the several languages, which are commonly used in the “ world. For it is not probable, that the effect “ of it continued beyond that very day, or any “ longer, than *the cloven tongues* appeared to sit “ upon their heads : when those vanished, the “ miracle ceased, and left them destitute of every “ other language, but that of their native country : for he thinks it certain, that they were “ not acquainted with any other, except what “ they might afterwards imperfectly acquire by “ natural means, as they found occasion for “ it [1].” This, though it be but little under-

[1] Nec dicendum est ex eo miraculo — donum linguarum ita accepisse Apostolos, ut deinceps omnia loquelarum genera — calluerint & usurparint. Non enim verisimile est ultra illum diem durasse vim illam, quam Spi-

ritus Sanctus his efflavit, tantisper locum habituram, quamdiu linguæ igneæ supra caput cujusque insedisse dicuntur. — Pro vero sane tenendum est, omnes fere Christi discipulos & Apostolos — non aliam novisse linguam, quam illam, in qua conversati sunt. —

stood,

stood, and will not perhaps be well relished by the present pretenders to orthodoxy, is certainly the most probable account of the matter; which I shall now endeavour to illustrate, as briefly and clearly as I am able, through the remaining part of this Essay.

If the language, which the Apostles made use of in propagating the Gospel by preaching or writing, had been inspired into them by God, we should expect surely to find it such, as is worthy of God; pure, clear, noble, and affecting, even beyond the force of common speech. *What man, says Cicero, is more flowing in his diction than Plato? Jupiter himself, the Philosophers say, if he speaks Greek, talks in the same manner* [2]. As they had no idea of any thing more excellent, so they imagined, that God himself would use the *Platonic* style; since nothing can come from him, but what is the most perfect in its kind: and this indeed is the universal sense of mankind, and the sole rule, which nature has given us, to distinguish the genuine productions of the Deity.

But if we try the Apostolic language by this rule, we shall be so far from ascribing it to God, as to think it scarce worthy of man; I mean, of the liberal and the polite: for we shall find it in fact to be utterly rude and barbarous, and

quam præter vernaculam, cendo Platone? Jovem qui-
&c. Vid. Cl. Salmaf. de dem, aiunt Philosophi, &
Hellenistica, p. 252, 253, Græce loquatur, sic loqui.
254. Cic. in Brut. p. 219. Edit.

[2] Quis uberior in di- Lambin.

abounding

abounding with every fault, which can possibly deform a language. “ If any one contends, “ says *Erasmus*, that the Apostles were inspired “ by God with the knowledge of all tongues, “ and that this gift was perpetual in them ; “ since every thing, which is performed by a di- “ vine power, is more perfect, according to *St. Chrysostom*, than what is performed either in “ the ordinary course of nature, or by the pains “ of man, how comes it to pass, that the lan- “ guage of the Apostles is not onely rough and “ unpolished, but imperfect also and confused, “ and sometimes even plainly solœcising or ab- “ surd ? for we cannot possibly deny, what the “ fact itself declares to be true [1].”

It would be tedious, to enumerate all the particular imperfections which are charged to the sacred style : whole books are written on the subject, and filled with the *barbarisms of the New Testament* : and though some writers also, on the other hand, prompted by a false zeal, have attempted to defend the *purity of scriptural Greek*, yet all, which they have been able to shew, is, that certain particular words and expressions are used there in the same sense and with the same propriety, with which they are employed by the Classic writers : which is nothing more, than what is natural and necessary in all human compositions ; that many words, even of the most elegant kind, should be used in common, both by the worst and the best authors, who

[1] Vid. *Erasm. Annotat. in Act. x. 38.*

write in the same language. But it will be impossible to prove, that the order and construction of those words, and the general turn of the periods, which constitute, what we call the style, is not truly barbarous and corrupt, and wholly remote from the ease and sweetness of the Classical compositions. Though “the whole diction
“of the New Testament, says *Heinfius*, may
“justly be called *Hebraistical*; yet we now and
“then meet with a Greek expression, of which
“the best Greek writers would not be ashamed [1].”

It is somewhat curious to observe, that there was a controversy of the same kind among the antient Heathens, concerning the style and composition of the *Delphic oracles*. For as those Oracles were delivered in verse, and the verses generally rude and harsh, and offending frequently, both in the exactness of meter and propriety of language, so men of sense easily saw, *that they could not be inspired by the Deity*: others, on the contrary, blinded by their prejudices, or urged by their zeal, to support the credit of the popular superstition, constantly maintained, that the verses were really beautiful, and noble, and worthy of God; and that the contrary opinion flowed from a false delicacy and sickly taste, which relished no poetry, but what was soft and sweet; and breathing nothing as it were but spices and perfumes. The dispute however seems to have been compounded, and a distinc-

[1] Exercitat. in Nov. Testament.

tion

tion found, in which all parties acquiesced, by allowing some *sort of inspiration, and divine authority to the matter of the Oracle*, but leaving all the rest, *to the proper talents and faculties of the Propbetes* [1]: who being tired at last, with the continual labor of versifying, began to utter her Oracles in prose, till the whole imposture fell by degrees into an universal contempt, and so finally expired [2].

We see the same prejudices still operating in the true, as they did of old in those false religions; and find many, who, not content with the allowed divinity of the Christian doctrine, must needs have the language also, in which it is delivered, acknowledged as divine. But as men of this turn, prepossessed with systems, and stiff in opinions, are apt to trust to any thing rather than their senses; and to be moved by authorities rather than by facts; I shall offer a few testimonies from some of the principal of the Antient Fathers, as well as of the modern Critics, to confirm the truth of what I am here asserting.

As for the Antients, whatever sort of inspiration they ascribed to the Apostles, they all allowed their language to have been intirely their own, and such, as we naturally expect from ignorant men, in the lowest state of life.

[1] Vid. Plutar. De Pythia. Oper. T. ii. p. 396, &c. Edit. Par. tur, non modo nostra ætate, sed jamdiu, jam ut nihil possit esse contemptius } Cic.

[2] Sed cur isto modo jam De Div. l. ii. Oracula Delphis non edun-

Justin Martyr tells us, “ that there went out
“ of *Jerusalem*, to preach the Gospel to the world,
“ twelve men onely; and those wholly illiterate,
“ and without any skill or knowledge of lan-
“ guages [1].”

“ The Apostles, says *Origen*, who were not
“ ignorant, in what part they were infirm and
“ deficient, declare themselves to be *Idiots in*
“ *speech*, but not in knowledge [2].— For if the
“ Scripture, says he, had been written with that
“ elegance and politeness of style, which was ad-
“ mired by the Greeks, it might have been
“ suspected, that its success was not owing to
“ the force of truth, but that men had been
“ caught and charmed by the flowing ease and
“ beauty of the language.”

Eusebius says, “ that the Apostles, though
“ perfectly pure in their lives, and adorned with
“ every virtue, were yet *rude and barbarous* in
“ speech, and trusting to the miraculous powers
“ imparted to them by our Saviour, neither un-
“ derstood nor attempted to recommend the
“ doctrines of their Master by any art or orna-
“ ments of language [3].”

St. Chrysostom, explaining the wonderful work
of God, in converting the Gentile world, adds ;
“ but by whom did he convert them ? by eleven
“ men, illiterate, idiots, ineloquent, poor—
“ without any force of words or rhetoric, or

[1] Apolog. i. p. 59. Edit. Thirlb. 1742. [2] Com-
ment. in Johan. p. 85, 86. Edit. Huet. & Philocal. c. iv.

[3] Hist. Eccles. l. iii. c. 24. p. 116. Edit. Cantab.

“ Science,

“ Science, to recommend them ; but Fishermen
 “ and Tent-makers, and of a strange language.
 “ For they did not speak the same tongue with
 “ those, whom they persuaded, but a foreign
 “ one, and different from all others, I mean the
 “ *Hebrew* [1].”

St. Jerom says, “ that they were indued with
 “ a power of working divers sorts of miracles,
 “ lest no body should otherwise believe a set of
 “ rustic, unlearned, and ignorant men ; want-
 “ ing every ornament of speech, to enforce their
 “ promises of the kingdom of heaven [2].”

St. Austin also observes, “ that Christ chose
 “ for his Apostles, men of mean birth, ignoble,
 “ ignorant, and illiterate—and that the divinity
 “ of their doctrine displayed itself the more il-
 “ lustriously, in convincing the world by such
 “ contemptible witnesses ; whose eloquence and
 “ persuasive powers lay in their wonderful
 “ works, not in their words [3].”

The modern Critics likewise and Interpreters
 generally affirm the same thing ; not merely
 upon the authority of those Antients, but from
 facts and instances, observed and collected by
 themselves from the Apostolic writings [4].

Erasmus tells us, “ that when the Apostles

[1] Oper. Tom. i. p. 575,
 576. Edit. Bened.

[2] Oper. Tom. iv. p. 35.
 Ed. Bened.

[3] Oper. Tom. vii. p. 659.

[4] Atque hanc de Apo-

stolorum sermone opinionem
 ipsa res nobis persuadet ; eti-
 amsi non suffragaretur sum-
 morum virorum auctoritas.

In Act. x. 38.

“ write

“ write in Greek, they borrow much from their
 “ own Hebrew; as at this day, men of little
 “ learning, when they talk Latin, always mix
 “ somewhat with it of their native tongue.
 “ For they did not learn their Greek from the
 “ orations of *Demosthenes*, but from their con-
 “ versation with the vulgar; so it seemed good
 “ to the divine wisdom, to use no help of human
 “ eloquence, towards drawing the world into his
 “ religion: nor was *the gift of tongues designed to*
 “ *be perpetual*: it was sufficient, that it was be-
 “ stowed, as oft as occasion required [1].”

Drusius and *Heinsius*, in their controversy with
Salmasius, about the *Hellenistic Dialect* of the
 New Testament, declare it to be *barbarous and*
impure, consisting indeed of Greek words, but full of
Syriasm, and Hebraisms [2]. *Salmasius* on the
 other hand, though he allows no such dialect, as
 that, which they call *Hellenistic*, yet gives the
 same character of the style of the sacred books,
 “ that it was a sort of Greek, compounded of
 “ various barbarisms; of *Latinisms, Hebraisms,*
 “ *Syriasm, and Macedonicisms*; had many words
 “ in it, that were not Greek, many *Alexandrian*
 “ and *Eatin*, more still merely barbarous, and
 “ *numberless phrases from the Hebrew and the*
 “ *Syriac* [3].”

[1] *Erasmi. ibid.*

[2] *Vid. Funus Ling. Hellenist. p. 11, 12.*

[3] *Ibid. p. 42.*

N. B. Those, who would

see this point more fully
 treated, may consult *Father*
Simons's Critical History of
the New Testament, where
he will find many more au-

These testimonies shew, what was the sense both of the antients and the moderns, concerning the general language of the New Testament; I shall procede therefore to open briefly in the next place, what has been observed and declared also by them, concerning the particular style and skill in languages of each single Apostle or writer of those sacred books.

St. Matthew is said to have published his Gospel the first of them, and in *the Hebrew tongue*, for the proper benefit of his countrymen [1]. But we may probably suppose, that the reason of his chusing to write in that language, was his ignorance, or imperfect knowledge of the Greek. For the Greek tongue being then the common language of *Asia*, and even of *Judaea* itself, while the *Hebrew* was confined in a manner to the walls of *Jerusalem*, an History, compiled in *Hebrew*, could be of no great service, in spreading the light of the Gospel, till it was translated into some other tongue of more general use. This therefore was the real case of this *Hebrew* Gospel; which was scarce sooner published, than translated into Greek by an unknown hand, and the *Hebrew* copy thrown aside, and within a few ages after quite lost [2].

authorities collected on the same subject.

[1] Primus omnium Matthæus est Publicanus — qui Evangelium in Judæa Hebræo sermone edidit; ob eo-

rum vel maxime causam, qui in Jesum crediderant ex Judæis. Hieron. Op. T. iy. p. 3.

[2] Quod quis postea in Græcum transtulerit, non fa-

St.

St. Mark, though distinguished by a *Roman* name, was yet a Jew; and, according to *Grotius*, *was better acquainted with the Hebrew, than the Greek, in which he wrote, yet moderately skilled in them both, as his diction plainly shews* [1].

St. Luke, was a Physician of *Antioch*, and having had on that account a more liberal education than the rest, is observed to have written with more elegance and propriety. But it is probable, that he understood little or nothing of the *Hebrew*; since he constantly draws his citations of the Old Testament from the *Septuagint Version*, which *St. Jerom* seems to ascribe to his want of skill in the *Hebrew* [2]. But this excuse, as *Erasmus* says, will hardly satisfy those who believe every thing, that belonged to the Apostles, to have been bestowed on them by the Holy Ghost, and especially the gift of tongues [3].

St. John, as both the antients and the moderns with one voice declare, was, of all the Apostles,

tis certum est. Ibid. par. ii. p. 102.

[1] *Judæum* fuisse, & *ἑρμηνεύωντα* magis quam *ἑλληνίζοντα*, quanquam sermonis utriusque mediocriter versatum, locutio evincit. Grot. in *Marc. i.*

[2] *Evangelistam Lucam* tradunt veteris *Ecclesiæ* tractatores, medicæ artis fuisse scientissimum, & magis *Græcas* litteras scisse quam *Hebræas*. Unde & sermo ejus

—comptior est. Hieron. T. iii. p. 63, 64.

[3] Nam *Lucam* excusat Hieronymus, haud scio quam commode, quod magis caluerit *Græcas* litteras quam *Hebraicas*.—Hanc excusationem non admittent, opinor, qui quicquid in Apostolis fuit, divini Spiritus peculiare donum esse volunt; præcipue donum linguarum. In *Matth. xiii. 14*.

the most barbarous in his language, and ignorant of letters: "Being the son of a Fisherman, and himself also of the same trade, he might learn the law when a child, says *Grotius*, as it was the custom with the Jews, but had no sort of tincture, either of the Hebrew or Greek literature; and his Greek style is plainly formed after the *Syriac* idiom of that age [1]."

St. Paul, the most eloquent of all the Apostles, and, as he declares of himself, indued also with *the gift of tongues more eminently than any man* [2]; yet, as some of the Ancient Fathers testify, was either wholly ignorant, or but very moderately skilled, in the *Greek*.

St. Jerom, speaking of a certain person of distinguished learning, who affirmed him to have been wholly unacquainted with it, seems to censure that opinion as *ridiculous*: yet he himself, on other occasions, does not scruple to pass the same judgement upon him. "I still approve, says he, what I have often said before, that when *Paul* declares himself to be rude in speech, he does not declare it out of any humility, but from the real sense and consciousness of his own mind. For being an *Hebrew of the He-*

[1] *Johannes Bethsaidensis, Piscatoris filius, piscator & ipse; legem quidem discere potuit puer, ut mos erat Hebræis, ceterum nulla tinctus fuit aut Hebraica aut Græca literatura— Hinc fit,*

ut supra ceteros Apostolos magna sit in Johannis dictione simplicitas, & sermo Græcus quidem, sed plane adumbratus ex Syriaco illius seculi.—Grot. in Johan. c. i.

[2] 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

I

"brews,

“*brews*, and most eloquent in his own tongue,
 “ he could not express the recondite senses of
 “ the Gospel in a foreign language.” In other
 places he takes notice of the *solæcisms and blun-*
ders which this Apostle was apt to make in the
 construction of his words and sentences; “ and
 “ how he employed *Titus*, as *his interpreter of the*
 “ *Greek tongue*, to assist him in writing his epi-
 “ stles :” for which reason, we find him ex-
 tremely grieved and not able *to take any rest*,
 while *Titus* was absent from him; but filled
 again with joy and comfort, though in the
 midst of tribulations, when he met with *Titus*
 again in *Macedonia*, whither he went to seek
 him; *being the pipe and organ*, as *Jerom* expresses
 it, through *which he preached the Gospel and sung*
to Christ [1].

[1] Vir apprime nostris
 temporibus eruditus, miror
 quomodo rem ridiculam lo-
 cutus sit. — *Paulus*, inquit,
Hebræus erat, & Græcas lit-
teras nesciebat. Hieron. Tom.
 iv. par. i. 315.

Illud quod crebro diximus,
Et si imperitus sermone, non ta-
men scientia, nequaquam *Paulum*
 de humilitate, sed de
 conscientię veritate dixisse,
 etiam nunc approbamus, &c.
 Ibid. p. 204.

Iste igitur, qui Solæcismos
 in verbis facit, qui non po-
 test hyperbaton reddere, sen-
 tentiamque concludere, au-

dacter sibi vendicat sapien-
 tiam. Ibid. p. 348.

Hebræus igitur ex Hebræ-
 is, qui esset in vernaculo ser-
 mone doctissimus, profundos
 sensus aliena lingua expri-
 mere non valēbat. Ib. p. 309,
 409.

Habebat ergo *Titum* inter-
 pretem. — Ergo contristatur
Paulus, quia prædicationis
 suæ in præsentiarum fistulam,
 organumque per quod *Christo*
 caneret, non invenerat;
 perrexitque in *Macedoniam*, ut
 ibi inveniret *Titum*, &c. Ib.
 p. 183. See 2 Cor. ii. 13.
 vii. 5, 6.

Hence in his Epistles, through a want of use and skill in writing Greek, it was his custom to scratch out the *last clause onely, or salutation, in his own hand*, as the mark of their being genuin: thus in the Epistle to the *Galatians*; *See*, says he, *with what huge letters I have written this, with my own hand*. Which we are not to understand, according to St. *Jerom*, as if he had written the whole Epistle himself, but *that small part onely which follows* [1]; and which those ancients seem to interpret, as if he had said, *see with what deformed and aukward letters I have scrawled out this subscription, that from this attempt to do, what I am not able to execute without difficulty, you may collect the greatness of my zeal and love for you* [2].

In writing also to the *Romans*, he made use of *Tertius*, as his scribe, to draw up the Epistle for him: whom the learned take to be the same with that *Silas*, so frequently mentioned in the Acts, as his companion and attendant; who, writing here to the *Romans*, uses his *Latin* name, *Tertius*, of the same import and interpretation,

[1] Et ne aliqua suppositæ Epistolæ suspicio nasceretur, ab hoc loco usque ad finem, manu sua ipse perscripsit, ostendens superiora ab alio exarata. Ibid. p. 314.

[2] Et quia necessitas expetebat, ut manu sua Epistolam subscriberet, contra con-

fuetudinem curvos tramites literarum, vix magnis apicibus exprimebat: etiam in hoc, suæ ad Galatas indicia caritatis ostendens, quod propter illos, id quoque, quod non poterat, facere conaretur. Ib. p. 315.

with

with his *Hebrew* name, *שליש* [1]. But some are apt to inquire, why *St. Paul*, in an Epistle to the *Romans*, should chuse to write in *Greek*, rather than in *Latin*; to whom *Grotius* gives this answer: "because both the Apostle and his Secretary, tho' not perhaps wholly ignorant of the *Latin*, were yet better qualified, the one to dictate, and the other to write in *Greek* [2]." But whatever smattering either of them might possibly have of the *Latin*, it is certain, that they were both but slenderly acquainted with the *Greek*, as this very epistle demonstrates; which in the judgement both of the ancients and the moderns, is strangely obscure and perplexed; abounding with *hyperbatons*; and employing the same words in various senses; and borrowing several of them from the peculiar dialect of *Cilicia* [3].

St. Peter also is said to have had his scribes as well as *St. Paul*, and in particular, to have employed *Mark the Evangelist*, as his *Greek* interpreter; and *St. Jerom* ascribes that difference of style, which is observed between his two epistles, to

[1] Vid. Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebraicæ*. p. 881. in *Cor. i. 1.*

[2] Credo id eo factum, quod & ipse & Scriba ejus, *Tertius*, nomine, quanquam fortasse Latini sermonis non prorsus ignari, Græce tamen rectius ille dictaret, hic scriberet. In *Rom. i. 1.*

[3] Queritur *Origenes*, hanc

interpretans Epistolam, Græcam dictionem esse perplexam, & hyperbatis obscuratam, & e Cilicum idiomate quædam parum Græcæ peregrinitatem respicere. *Erasm.* in *Rom. i. 7.* Vid. *Origen.* *Comment. p. 429.* Edit. *Huet. It. Hieron. T. iv. par. i.*

p. 180.

the different secretaries, whom he happened to use for each of them [1]. And this is supposed to have been the case of all the other Apostles: “for being all of them, says *Salmasius*, *Galileans* and *Hebrews*, they had each their several companions and associates in the ministry of preaching the Gospel: who were partly *Grecians* born in *Syria*, and acquainted therefore with the *Syriac*; and partly *Syrians*, who, by conversing with the *Grecians*, had acquired the use also of the *Greek* tongue. These they employed as interpreters, to translate into *Greek*, what they dictated to them in the *Hebrew* or *Syriac*. — This, adds he, is expressly declared of some; not so well known of others, because not so declared; but probable of them all, because certain of some of them. — Hence all those *Syriacisms*, which are spread over the whole text of the New Testament, and bear the clear marks of a translation, made, as it were, word for word [2].”

I shall only add to these testimonies, a passage from *St. Chrysostom*, very apposite to the present purpose; in which that Father tells us, “how he once happened to hear a ridiculous dispute between a *Greek* and a *Christian*, on

[1] Denique et duæ Epistolæ, quæ feruntur *Petri*, stylo inter se & charactere discrepant, structuraque verborum. Ex quo intelligimus, pro necessitate rerum, diver-

sis eum usum interpretibus. Hier. ib. p. 183.

[2] Vid. *Salmas. Comment. de Hellenist.* p. 256, 258.

“ this

“ this very subject—the *Greek* maintained, that
 “ *Paul* was utterly illiterate : the Christian, on
 “ the other hand, was simple enough to affirm,
 “ that he was more eloquent even than *Plato*.
 “ By which they, each of them, severally, hurt
 “ their own cause. For if *Paul* was really the
 “ more learned of the two, the wonder would
 “ presently cease, how he came to get the better
 “ of *Plato*, and to draw all his followers to
 “ himself ; since it would appear to be owing
 “ to the superiority of his talents, not to the
 “ divine grace : whereas if *Paul*, illiterate as he
 “ was, could vanquish the learned *Plato*, such a
 “ victory was glorious, and the hand of God
 “ manifest in it. Wherefore he exhorts the
 “ Christians, whenever they heard any of the
 “ *Greeks* contemning the learning of the Apo-
 “ stles, to depreciate it still more, and instead
 “ of extolling the wisdom of *Paul*, to extoll ra-
 “ ther all those, who were admired among the
 “ Gentiles, for their learning and eloquence ;
 “ and to declare their own Apostles at the same
 “ time, to be *barbarous and unlearned* ; for that
 “ was the onely way to confound their adver-
 “ saries in the end, and gain a noble victory
 “ over them [1].”

These facts and authorities manifestly prove, that the gift of tongues was not of a lasting or perpetual kind, but given onely on certain important occasions, as an *illustrious sign*, to those first preachers of the Gospel, that a divine power

[1] Vid. Chrysoſt. Op. T. iii. p. 76.

continued

continued to accompany them, and crowned their labors with success; and when this particular end was served, the gift itself was presently withdrawn. The same facts also demonstrate, that the languages, which the Apostles and Evangelists afterwards used, as well in their several writings, as in preaching the Gospel to foreign nations, were not the fruit of this gift, or of divine inspiration, but merely such as they had been taught to speak from their birth, or had acquired by practice and conversation with those, among whom they resided: and that we may say with great truth of every one of them, what was said in particular of St. Peter, *Thou art surely a Galilean, for thy speech bewrayeth thee* [1].

Since the Apostles then cannot be supposed to have received their language from heaven; it will be asked perhaps, by what human means they could acquire that knowledge of the *Greek*, of which they appear to have been possessed. But this will admit a very easy solution, if we recollect, what all the learned allow, that the *Greek* language prevailed and flourished in common use, through the greatest part of the eastern world. *The Latin tongue is confined indeed within narrow bounds, says Cicero, but the Greek is read almost by all nations* [2]. Hence flowed that custom, so common with the sacred writers, of dividing all mankind into *Jews* and *Greeks* [3].

[1] Matt. xxvi. 73. [2] Orat. pro Archia. [3] Acts xiv. i. xviii. 4. xix. 10, &c.

But

But what is most to our purpose, we find the Greek tongue to have been generally current also in *Judæa*, and in the city of *Jerusalem* itself; in which there seem to have been several Greek *Synagogues* [1]. The province of *Galilee* also was divided between the *Jews* and the *Greeks*; and *Capernaum* the Metropolis was in the *Grecian* division [2]. The city of *Gadara* too, where *Jesus* sent *the Legion of Devils into the Swine*, and *Cana* likewise, where he wrought his first miracle, were under the same jurisdiction [3].

Now it was in these very parts where our Saviour principally resided, and gathered all his Apostles: two of whom have *Grecian* names, *Philip* and *Andrew*, and a third, two different names, *Thomas* and *Didymus*, the one *Hebrew*, the other *Greek*; by the first of which he was called among the *Jews*, by the second among the *Gentiles* [4]. It is certain also, that in *Jerusalem*, a great number of the first converts were *Greeks*: infomuch that the Apostles found it necessary, to select *seven of the most eminent Disciples*, to be set apart for the particular business of providing for the maintenance of the *Grecian widows*. And they chose *Stephen, a man full of*

[1] Acts vi. 9. Vid. Lightfoot, p. 929.

[2] *Galilæa Gentium*—in qua est *Capernaum* *Galilææ* Metropolis. Zeger. in Johan. iv. 43, 44.

[3] Est enim *Cana*, in *Galilæa Gentium*, oppidum,

quod *Hieronymus* in *Hebraicis locis* testatur ætate sua adhuc extitisse. *Erasm.* in Joh. ii. 1. De *Gadara*. Vid. *Scultetij Exercitat. Evangel.* l. ii. c. 49.

[4] John xi. 16.

faith,

faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch [1]. Where it is remarkable, that all the seven have *Grecian* names, and were consequently of *Grecian* families: and as the last of them is particularly distinguished by the character of *a proselyte of Antioch*, so it is probable, that the rest were natives of *Jerusalem*: to whom we may add *Nicodemus*, a person of senatorian rank, and a member of the great *Sanhedrim*, yet, as we may collect from his name, of *Greek* extraction also [2]. From all which we see the reason, of what the learned Dr. *Lightfoot* declares, “that the *Greek* language was in such use and honor with the Jewish nation, that it was preferred to all others, and held by the Doctors themselves, in the same rank with their native tongue [3].”

To conclude then: it is reasonable to imagine, that the Apostles, who were born and bred, and spent their whole lives among those who *spoke Greek*, might acquire a moderate knowledge of that tongue, even from their childhood. For this is natural and common to the most illiterate, to catch some imperfect use of a foreign language, which they hear constantly spoken by all around them. But if we suppose them to have made but little or no acquaintance with it, in their younger years, it is probable, that the necessities of their Apostolic function,

[1] Acts vi. 5. [2] John iii. 1. [3] Lightf. Hor. Hebr. in Matt. i. p. 253. It. Chron. Tempor. p. 110.

and the talk of preaching the Gospel, might induce them to apply themselves to the acquisition of it, even in their advanced life. This I find to have been the opinion of *Erasmus*, who says, “ It is not strange, that when *Ægypt*, *Syria*, *Cilicia*, and all the lesser *Asia* talked *Greek*, “ the Apostles should acquire the knowledge “ of it without a miracle, when they lived so “ many years among those who spoke it. Nor “ were the Gospels presently written by them. “ A stranger, who lives in *France*, will learn to “ speak *French* in a year’s time, though he “ knew nothing of it before : and can we wonder then, that the Apostles, in so many “ years, should gain a moderate skill in the “ *Greek* [1] ? ”

Salmasius also was of the same opinion, that the greatest part of the Apostles learnt the *Greek* tongue but very late ; and not till they were commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations [2]. *Grotius* likewise declares in particular of St. *John*, “ that he had no tincture either “ of the *Hebrew* or *Greek* literature, but might “ perhaps have gained some share of each, when “ he was old, in *Asia*, where he spent the greatest part of his days, to an extreme age ; partly in the *Isle of Patmos*, to which he was banished, and partly at *Ephesus*, both before “ and after his banishment, as all the ancients “ testify.”

This opinion therefore of those great and

[1] *Erasm.* in *Acts* x. 38.

[2] *Grot.* in *Joh.* i. 1.

learned

learned men, that *the Apostles acquired their Greek knowledge chiefly in their later years*, seems, on the whole, to be the most probable, and most agreeable also, to what the ancient writers have delivered concerning them. There were but two of the whole number, who wrote any Gospels, *Matthew* and *John*: of whom *Matthew*, as it is said above, wrote his Gospel in *Hebrew*, as having but little or no knowledge of the *Greek*; and *John* did not write his *Greek* Gospel till he was extremely old, and had lived many years in *Asia*. The other two Evangelists, *Mark* and *Luke*, are declared by all, to have been the companions and interpreters of the Apostles, *Peter* and *Paul*; and were not therefore, so properly, the authors, as the Scribes onely of those Gospels which pass under their names [1].

[1] Μάρκος ὁ μαθητὴς καὶ ἑρμηνεύτης Πέτρου, καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ ὑπὸ Πέτρου κηρυσσόμενα ἱερωσέως ἡμῖν παραδέδωκε. Καὶ Λουκᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀκροῦθος Παῦλος, τὸ ὑπὸ ἰκεῖνου κηρυσσόμενον εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βιβλίῳ κατέθετο. Iren. Adv. Hæres. l. iii. c. 1.

We are told also by some of the Ancients, that when *St. Paul*, in his Epistles, speaks of *my Gospel*, and *our Gospel*, [2 Tim. ii. 8. 2 Thes. ii. 14.] he means *the Gospel of his Secretary and Interpreter*, *St. Luke*. God bearing them witness with signs and wonders, according to his own will. Heb. ii. 4.

Offenditur Galatas—dona habuisse virtutum — & tamen post tanta (quia forsitan gratiam discernendorum Spirituum non habebant) a falsis Doctoribus irretiti sunt. Observandum etiam quod operari virtutes dicantur in his, qui non tenent Evangelii veritatem, &c. Hier. in Galat. c. iii. Op. T. iv.

Semel duntaxat legimus Apostolos novis linguis loquentes—quanquam vero propius est Apostolos id temporis unica lingua fuisse locutos, ac virtute divina factum, ut ab omnibus æque intelligerentur. Erasmi in Act. x. 38.

SOME

SOME SHORT
REMARKS
ON A
STORY told by the ANTIENTS,
CONCERNING
ST. *JOHN* the EVANGELIST,
AND
CERINTHUS the HERETIC;
AND

On the use, which is made of it by the Moderns,
to enforce the Duty of shunning Heretics.

THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
VOLUME 13
PART 1
1903

SOME SHORT REMARKS ON A

STORY told by the ANCIENTS, etc.

THE story, which I am going to examine, is told by *Irenæus* in the following manner; “That there were some, who had heard *Polycarp* relate, how *St. John*, the disciple of our Lord, going one day to the public bath in *Ephesus*, and finding the Heretic *Cerintus* in it, started back instantly without bathing, crying out; Let us run away, lest the bath should fall upon us, while *Cerintus*, the enemy of truth, is in it [1].”

This story is applied by *Dr. Berriman*, in one of his Sermons, to inforce the duty of *shunning Infidels and Heretics*: and by *Dr. Waterland*, to recommend a practice, which he warmly presses upon all Christians, of rejecting from their society and communion, *all the impugnors of fundamentals* [2]: And it is sure to be thrown in our way, either from the pulpit or the press, by all

[1] Καὶ ἰσθὶς ὁ ἀκηκοὺς port. of the Doctr. of the εὐαγγ., ὅτι ἰωάννης, &c. *Iren.* Trin. p. 105, 127. it. *Berrim.* On shunning Heret. l. iii. c. 3.

[2] See *Dr. Waterl. Im-* p. 352.

angry Divines, as oft as they find occasion, to inflame the people against an Antagonist, whom, through zeal or heat of controversy, they are disposed to treat as an adversary to the Christian faith.

Since this story then, as it is commonly applied, naturally tends, to excite prejudices, and uncharitable aversions in the minds of men, and is considered generally by zealots, as an Apostolic rule and precedent, for the exercise of all kinds of rudeness towards those, who differ from them in matters of religion, I cannot but think it of use to the public quiet, to inquire into the real state of it, and not to suffer it to have any other credit or influence, than what is strictly due to it: for in that great uncharitableness, which reigns among all the Sects of Christians in these days, there is no occasion to ransack antiquity, for any additional motives of strife and mutual hatred.—I shall consider therefore,

1st, What objections may reasonably be offered to the truth of it, as well from the nature of the evidence, as the matter of the story itself,

2dly, Shall shew, that though we allow it to be true, it cannot justify the use, to which the Doctors abovementioned, and many others have applied it.

I. As to the evidence of the story, it rests on the single testimony of *Irenæus*, and that given to us, at second hand onely, or from hearsay: for he does not say, that he received it himself from *Polycarp*, though when young he had seen and conversed

conversed with him, but that *some of Polycarp's disciples* had heard him relate it; of which number there were many, who had conversed with him more familiarly, and frequently than *Irenæus*. Since he received it then from certain persons unknown, who received it from *Polycarp*, who received it from *St. John*, there is room enough to suppose, that he might possibly be deceived in it: which, considering the character of the man, and of the age wherein he lived, can hardly be thought an unreasonable supposition.

But if we should allow, what many are apt to infer from this passage, that *Irenæus* meant here to signify that it was he himself, who heard the story from *Polycarp*; we are then to consider, what degree of credit may be due to his testimony. But this I have already considered at large in a former treatise: in which I have shewn, that though of all the Fathers, whose works now remain to us, he was the most diligent collector of *Apostolic traditions*, and had gathered them, as he affirms, *from the mouths of antient men, who had conversed with the Apostles themselves*; yet in every single instance of them, which he has particularly recorded, and peremptorily attested, he was either deluded himself, or has willfully deluded others, by a false and forged pretence of *Apostolic authority*. Among many examples, which I have there produced in the support of this charge, the following one will sufficiently teach us, how far we may depend upon his fidelity.

There were certain Heretics in those days, with whom *Irenæus* was disputing, who allowed but *one and thirty years* to our Saviour's life, and the *last of them alone* to his ministry: in contradiction to whom, *Irenæus* roundly affirms, *that our Saviour actually lived to an old age, and was fifty years old at least at the time of his death*: for which he alledges *the unanimous testimony of all the old men, who had lived with St. John in Asia, and received this account from him; some of whom, he says, had seen the other Apostles also, and heard the same from them all, and bore witness accordingly to the truth of it* [1]. Now it is not possible, that any tradition can be more authentically delivered than this, by one of the most venerable Bishops of the primitive Church, who lived within a few years after the Apostles themselves; yet it is certain, as the warmest admirers of antiquity in general, and of *Irenæus* in particular, must own, that neither *St. John*, nor any other of the Apostles, could ever declare such a story to any one; and that the whole therefore must be a mere fiction, either of those antient men, who had conversed with the Apostles, or of *Irenæus* himself, who pretended to have heard it from them, as being utterly inconsistent with the history of the Gospel.

But the Gospel was then onely in a few hands;

[1] Iren. l. ii. c. 39. eadem ab ipsis audierunt & Quidam autem eorum non testantur de hujusmodi relatione. solum Joannem, sed & alios Apostolos viderunt, & hæc

and

and *Apostolic tradition* the shortest way of silencing those Heretics; being an argument of the greatest weight with those, who believed it, and what could not easily be confuted by those, who did not. The pious Editor of *Irenæus's* works makes the following remark upon the place; “*Irenæus*, says he, affirms in express words, that “Christ continued to teach beyond *the fortieth*, “or even *the fiftieth year of his age*; which he “endeavours to confirm by texts of Scripture, “and by reasons also, though weak ones, which “the common judgement of the Church has re- “jected. We ought however to judge can- “didly of the blessed Martyr, who, *by an im- “petus of confuting the Heretics*, was carried into “the contrary extreme: a case, which, as “it is manifest, has frequently happened to “the most holy and learned men [1].” But since *Irenæus's* whole life and writings were peculiarly devoted to the confutation of Heresy, what is it, that the most candid can possibly judge on this occasion, but that the same *impetus of confuting them*, which carried him beyond the truth in one case, would carry him the same length in another, and prompt him to use every argument, which could promote so good a cause?

This suspicion will be confirmed, not onely by the conduct of *Irenæus* in other similar cases,

[1] Disertis verbis affirmat Christum ultra quadragagesimum, aut etiam quinquagesimum annum docuisse, &c. Vid. Fevardent. Not. 4. in Iren. ibid.

but by the matter of the story itself, which on many accounts seems to imply a behaviour unworthy of the character of *an Apostle*; to whose dignity it would have been more agreeable, instead of running out of the Bath himself, to have driven *Cerinthus* out before him. *Resist the Devil and he will flee*, is an injunction given to every private Christian: and it is much more the part of an Apostle, to resist and disarm an Heretic; whereas so precipitate a flight betrays fear and diffidence, and gives an occasion of triumph to the Adversary.

The reason also, said to be given by him for his flight, is childish and superstitious: *left the bath should fall, because Cerinthus was in it*. As if it had been usual with God, to exert his judgments in that manner on notorious sinners, by burying them under the ruins of walls and houses: a notion, which seems to be expressly discouraged and exploded by Christ himself [1]. Or, if there was any cause to apprehend, that God would take so extraordinary a method of punishing the Heretic, there was a greater still, to be assured, that he would provide at the same time, in some way as extraordinary, for the safety of the Apostle: it being weak to imagine, that when he had spared the life of so profligate an enemy to that day, he should be in such haste at last to destroy him, as to involve his old and faithful servant in the same ruin.

[1] Luke xiii. 1.

The conduct of the other Apostles towards the profess'd adversaries of the Gospel was quite contrary to this of *St. John*, as we find it described in the History of their Acts; where we read how *Peter* rebuked and confounded the Prince and Leader of all Heretics, *Simon Magus*, who had bewitched the people of *Samaria*, by his Sorceries, and was revered by them as a Deity. And if any credit be due to Ecclesiastical History, we are there told, that when the same *Simon* was playing his magical tricks again in *Rome*, in defiance and opposition to the Gospel, and, by the help of his familiar Dæmons, was flying briskly in the air, *St. Peter*, by the force of his prayers, brought him down from the sky, with so precipitate a tumble, that he was dashed to pieces by the fall, in the sight of all the people. Thus, when *St. Paul* likewise was opposed and obstructed in preaching the Gospel, by another Sorcerer and false Prophet, called *Elymas*, he first reproached him sharply for his Diabolical practices, and then, *in the name of the Lord*, struck him instantly blind. And this is the conduct, which one would have expected from an Apostle, upon an encounter with *Cerintus*, the chief Heretic and adversary of the Gospel then living, that he would either have confuted and put him to shame by the force of his reasoning, or confounded him by some act of that extraordinary power, with which he was indued from above.

D d 4

But

But *St. John*, as *Dr. Waterland* declares, *was all love, meekness, and charity* [1]: and this indeed is said to have been his peculiar character, above that of the other Apostles. And we are told of him by *St. Jerom*, “that in his extreme age, when he used to be carried to the Church by his disciples, it was his custom, to do nothing more, than repeat this single exhortation; *My little children, love one another*: and when the people grew tired with hearing nothing else from him but that one precept, and asked, why he continued always to repeat the same thing; he answered; *It is a saying worthy of John, and a precept of our Lord, and if you practise this alone, it is sufficient* [2].” The same doctrine, of love, charity, and mutual benevolence, was eminently propagated also by his two principal Scholars, *Ignatius*, and *Polycarp*: *What thanks are due to you*, says *Ignatius*, *if you love onely the good disciples? you must subdue rather the more pestilent sort, by your mildness and gentleness* [3]. And *Polycarp* speaking of one, who had fallen away from the faith, says; *Be moderate on this occasion, and look not on such as enemies, but call them back, as suffering and erring members* [4].

[1] See Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 152.

[2] Nihil aliud per singulas solebat proferre collectas, nisi hoc, *Filioli, diligite alterutrum*, &c. Hieron. Op.

T. iv p. 314.

[3] Vid. Ignat. Ep. ad Polycarp. § 11.

[4] Vid. Polycarp. Ep. ad Philip. § 11.

How

How much more amiable then, and agreeably to his proper character, is this same Apostle represented in another story, delivered also by the antients, concerning his painful and affectionate pursuit, of the *Captain of a band of robbers*; whom he followed into the mountains, and by his affectionate and paternal remonstrances, brought back from the head of his crew, and restored to the Church [1]? yet from this charitable and benevolent act, *Dr. Waterland* has contrived to draw a most perverse and pernicious inference, *that by flying from the Heretic and running after the robber, he shewed, how much more he detested Heresies, than common immoralities* [2].

It is observable likewise, that this story is related with no small variation by the Antients themselves. *Epiphanius* tells it more than once, not of *Cerintbus*, but of another Hæretic, called *Ebion*: and *why might not both of them*, says the Editor of *Irenæus*, *be found together in the bath at the same time*? *Baronius* makes the same supposition, to reconcile the two Fathers; while others suppose, that *Cerintbus* and *Ebion* are but different names of the same person [3]: Yet *Tertullian* expressly distinguishes them, and calls *Ebion the Successor of Cerintbus* [4]. But *Mr. Tillemont* solves the matter more judiciously by remarking, that there is no need of such con-

[1] Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. 1. iii. c. 23. [2] See *Waterland*.
ibid. p. 152. [3] Vid. Fevardent. Not. 2. in Iren.
ibid. & Baron. ad Ann. 74. [4] Vid. Oper. p. 252. B.

jectures, because it is common with *Epiphanius* to make blunders in history ; *who has added, he says, several other particulars, both trifling and improbable, to this very story.* One of the particulars, which he has added, is this ; *That St. John had never before made use of the public baths, till he was sent thither on this occasion by a divine inspiration, to give this open testimony of his detestation of Heresy.* Some of the other Fathers as well as *Epiphanius*, declare *Cerintus* to have been the disciple of *Carpocrates*, who was not in being, as the Chronologers tell us, till after the death of *St. John* ; and if so, this whole story must of course fall the ground.

The Moderns also, in their turn, have added some embellishments to the same story. *Fevardentius*, in his notes on this passage of *Irenæus*, says, that *St. Jerom*, in his treatise against the *Luciferians* affirms, *that immediately after the retreat of St. John, the bath actually fell down and crushed Cerintus to death.* Yet there is not the least intimation of any such fact, as *Dr. Grabe* observes, either in that, or any other part of *St. Jerom's* works [1]. Another writer with as little truth, asserts the same thing, on the authority of venerable *Bede* ; and some also appeal to *Poly-carp*, as the voucher of it ; and all of them take occasion, to moralize upon it with great gravity, as an instance of God's judgement upon *Hæretics* [2].

[1] Vid. *Iren. Oper. Edit. Oxon.* p. 204. Not. 2.

[2] *Monsr. Bayle*, who mentions this story with all
From

From these remarks upon the story, I shall proceed to the lesson, which is drawn from it by the two Doctors above mentioned, and shew,

2dly, That, though we allow the fact to be true, it will not justify the use, to which they have applied it.

Now the constant use, which is made of this story, is to demonstrate the duty of *skunning and affronting Heretics; of denying them the common offices of civility; treating them as persons excommunicated, and detestable in the eyes of God and*

these particulars, makes the following remark upon it.

“Observe, says he, the progress of it. *Irenæus* was probably the first who published it, and contented himself with relating barely, what he had heard. But those, who came after him, finding his narrative too simple and naked, added some embroidery to it. They fancied it dishonourable to the memory of the Apostle, to have it believed, that he had ever made use of the public baths: they affirmed therefore, that he had never done it before, and was sent thither on this occasion, by the express command of heaven. It was necessary in the next place, to find out a good reason

“for so particular an inspiration: and a reason was presently found; viz. the importance of letting the faithful know, what an horror they all ought to conceive against the enemies of the truth; and how the divine justice was always ready to exert itself by some exemplary severity against an Arch-Heretic. Lastly, as it might seem indecent, for *St. John* to be thought liable to any vain and unnecessary fear, so it was found convenient to suppose, that the Heretic, with whom he refused to bath himself, was crushed to pieces by the fall of the house.”
Vid. Artic. CERINTHUS, Not. D. in Dictionaire.

man:

man: and this pressed upon all Christians by the authority and example of *St. John* [1].

But I would ask, whether a behaviour of this sort be agreeable to the ordinary temper and spirit of the Gospel, or of that *Jesus*, who came into the world, as a *Physician to the sick*; and in that character, sought out *the Publican*, and *the Sinner*, for the opportunity of healing them; and preferred the *Hæretical Sadducee*, and the *Schismatical Samaritan*, to the *fierce Zealot*, and the *Orthodox Pharisee*? No, it is so far from being conformable to the ordinary rules of Christian duty, that it was copied, as *Dr. Berri-man* himself owns, from *the Jewish institutes* [2]: as if it flowed from that principle, by which this same Apostle, while yet raw and unacquainted with the benevolent temper of his new religion, was calling down *fire from heaven on the Samaritans*, after the example of *Elias*, and was reproved accordingly by our Lord, for not knowing what manner of spirit he was of [3].

If I should ask these Gentlemen also, what it is, that they mean by the word *Hæretic*; we should find in the end, that they meant nothing more by it, than one, who differed from them in any article of religion, which they held to be important. *Dr. Waterland* calls him, an *open Impugner of fundamentals*, and labours to prove, that we ought not to hold communion with any

[1] See Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. c. iv. p. 122, &c.

[2] Sermon, Vol. ii. p. 351.

[3] Luke ix. 55.

of that character [1]. And should we ask once more, *what are these fundamentals?* he would refer us without doubt in the first place to *the doctrine of the Trinity*: whence I have drawn the testimonies above ascribed to him. *The importance of which* makes the subject of that very book; and this doctrine indeed is held so fundamental by the Papists, that the disbelief of it, though but secretly entertained by a Priest, is declared to annul the whole efficacy of his ministry, and of the Sacraments themselves, not onely to himself, but to all others, how innocent soever, to whom he should happen to administer them. But among Protestants, the distinction of fundamentals, has been constantly applied to those doctrines alone, which are clearly and precisely delivered in the holy Scriptures: and how far this character will suit with the doctrine of the Trinity, I leave to others to determine: yet this, I think, we need not scruple to say, that it is no where expressly declared by any of the earliest Fathers; and as the most learned among the Papists assert, was never affirmed or taught by the Church, before the Council of Nice [2].

Irenæus, speaking of the Mosaic distinction of animals into *clean and unclean*, says; “the law foretold all these things figuratively, by animals denoting men: those, which divide the hoof and chew the cud, it pronounces clean: those, which do neither, unclean. Who then

[1] Import. &c. c. iv.

[2] See Chillingw. Pref.

§ 18, 33.

“are

“are clean? those, who go on firmly, believing
 “*in the Father and in the Son. For this is the*
 “*firmness of those, who have the double boof* [1].”

Hence we see, that the fundamental doctrine, or the firmness of the Christian faith, in this early age was, to believe in *the Father and in the Son*. In the ages next following, many different opinions successively prevailed, and were held orthodox in their turns: but as soon as the *Arian* controversy began to disturb the peace of the Church, *Constantine the Great* wrote a letter, in common to *Arius* and *Alexander* Bishop of *Alexandria*, the opposite chiefs in the dispute, in which he treats the whole quæstion, “as vain, “foolish, and impertinent; as a dispute of “words without sense, which none could explain, nor any comprehend; as the fruit of “idleness and leisure misemployed, which no “way affected the sum of religion; and that “to quarrel about such trifles and subtleties, “was childish, and below the gravity of Priests; “wherefore he earnestly exhorts them to put “an end to so silly a contest, productive “of nothing but quarrels and blasphemies “among the people; and to return to their “former friendship and communion with each “other.”

This letter was sent by *Hosius*, a learned and venerable Bishop; chiefly intrusted by the Emperor in the affairs of the Church; and is com-

[1] Iren. l. v. c. 8.

ended

mended both by *Eusebius* and *Socrates*, as excellent, admirable, and full of wisdom[1]. Which shews, what was the opinion both of the Church and the State, with regard to this question, or parting point, as *Dr. Waterland* calls it, before the Council of *Nice*.

But to return to our story of *St. John* and *Cerintbus*. If we allow it to be true, the conduct of *St. John* cannot be considered in any other light, than as an extraordinary case, or the effect of that divine power, which was peculiar to the Apostles, and ceased with the Apostolic age; by which they were enabled to penetrate the hearts of men, and discern the secret motives, that actuated those early corruptors of the Christian faith. *Epiphanius*, as I have already intimated, declares it to have been suggested by a special inspiration. It is absurd therefore, to propose an act, directed by an extraordinary commission from heaven, as a rule of proceeding in ordinary cases: and it would make wild work among us, for weak and fallible men to revive and exercise a discipline, which was grounded on infallibility; and to pretend to judge, with an Apostolic authority, of the hearts and spirits of their fellow Christians, without the Apostolic gift of discerning those spirits; yet this is one of the principal points, which is pressed by *Dr. Waterland*, through his whole treatise on *the Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*.

[1] Vid. Euseb. Vit. Constant. l. ii. c. 64, &c. it. Socrat. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 7.

The same Doctor however, on a different occasion, where he is vindicating the morality of certain acts, related of the antient Prophets and other pious men in the Old Testament, declares, “ that such facts of an extraordinary kind, which were the immediate effects of a divine impulse, are not recorded as examples of common practice, nor to be warranted in common men, unless specially authorised in the same manner, as those Prophets were.” The case is the same with regard to the Apostles: the severe censures, which they sometimes passed on Hæretics, and other wicked men, being the suggestions of a divine spirit, ought not to be drawn into precedent, but by the direction of the same spirit: for otherwise, the peace of the Church would necessarily be disturbed by perpetual schisms and quarrels, and its best members, through the clamor and rage of a few zealots, often treated as the worst. Every man’s experience will furnish instances, of the wretched fruits of this zeal, in the bigoted, vicious, and ignorant part, both of the Clergy, and the Laity; who puffed with the pride of an imaginary orthodoxy, and detesting all free inquiry, as dangerous to their ease, and sure to expose their ignorance, take pleasure in defaming and insulting men of learning, candor, and probity, who happen to be touched with any scruples, or charged with any opinions, which they think fit to call Hæretical.

The

The very learned and pious Bishop *Taylor*, speaking of this very story, says; *It is a good precedent for us, when the case is equal. St. John could discern the spirit of Cerintbus; and his hæresy was notorious, fundamental, and highly criminal; and the Apostle, a person assisted up to infallibility.* It is this character then of Infallibility, which alone can warrant us in copying the pretended act of the Apostle; for unless we be possessed of this, the case can never be equal: and the sole inference, which we can reasonably draw in the mean time, from *St. John's* behaviour towards *Cerintbus*, as well as towards the Thief, above-mentioned, is; that by his power of discerning spirits, he knew the Hæretic to be a profligate and determined enemy of the Christian faith; and the Thief, to be a good-natured youth, who, through the giddiness of his age, and the contagion of bad company, had been drawn inconsiderately into a rash and desperate frolic. But to propose this case, as a test or standing proof of the *superior iniquity of Hæresy, above the grossest immorality*; of its being more abominable than robbery, or in some cases, as we are told [1], than even *felony or treason*, is certainly dangerous to society; tending to turn men's heads with fanaticism; and to introduce violent and sanguinary proceedings in the affair of religious differences.

For what else is it, that has given birth to all those murders and massacres, which Hæretics

[1] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 218.

have so often suffered in all those countries, where this doctrine has ever prevailed, and to which they stand exposed at this day, wherever it still prevails? the effect is natural and unavoidable: for if robbery and treason be crimes so intolerable to society, that it is necessary to punish them with death, it follows of course, that crimes, more odious still both to God and man, must deserve a severer treatment; by the addition of racks, tortures, and fires, which are all therefore actually applied in such cases, by every Christian nation, persuaded of the truth of this same principle.

Our Divines indeed take pains to disclaim the charge of Popish cruelty, and profess to mean nothing more, than the necessity of *spiritual censures*. They tell us, that piety to God, charity to man, justice to ourselves require the exercise of such censures: *That it is fervent charity, though expressed in an harsher way; since palliating medicines would be cruel, where corrosives are the only means of cure* [1]. But all this is a mere fallacy, and the very cant of the Romish Inquisitors; who make the same pretence of piety, charity, and justice, without a grain of them in any of their proceedings, and in the very exercise of such barbarities, as are shocking to humanity itself [2].

[1] See Import. of the *charitatis instructionem*, Ant. Doctr. of the Trin. p. 133. de Domin. Consil. reedit.

[2] *Sancæ Inquisitionis* p. 23.
paternam curam—plenam

Dr. Waterland however says, *That Divines may still desire, that such offenders may live to repent, rather than suffer death or civil penalties.* But what if they should not repent? why then, *they perish*, he says, *with their eyes open, and may take the blame to themselves* [1]. And in truth, all spiritual jurisdiction, whether in Popish or Protestant hands, must of course terminate in civil penalties; since it would be contemptible without them, and unable to enforce its own censures. But since civil punishments for speculative opinions, if openly and professedly claimed, might be shocking to a free nation, it is artful to evade that odium, by beginning at the other end, and to establish the thing more securely, by seeming to disavow it. But it is certain, that there is very little difference between Protestant and Popish tyranny, if a liberty be not allowed to private judgement in all speculative opinions, without restraint, or fear of punishment, on any other account, than of its being exercised unseasonably and intemperately to the disturbance of the state.

On the whole; it appears, I think, from what is said above, 1st, That this hearsay-story concerning *St. John* and *Cerintbus*, is at the best of so uncertain and doubtful a credit, that we cannot reasonably lay any stress, or ground any point of duty upon it. 2dly, That if we should grant it even to be true, it

[1] Ibid. p. 218, 219.

would be absurd and dangerous to the peace of the Church, in its present circumstances, to establish it as a rule of conduct, to private and ordinary Christians.

ESSAY

ESSAY

ON THE

Allegorical and Literal INTERPRETATION

OF THE

CREATION and FALL of MAN.

Ec 3

Allegorical Interpretation, *etc.*

IT is a principle constantly laid down by all the Expositors of Sacred Writ, that every part of it must be expounded in such a manner, as to render it consistent with reason, and the known attributes of the Deity; and whatever will not admit of that interpretation, cannot be received, as of divine authority. If this be true, it follows, that our notion of God and his Attributes, is not to be drawn originally from the Scriptures, but from nature and reason, previously to our study of Scriptures, which otherwise would be apt to lead us into dangerous errors. *He who cometh to God, says the Apostle, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him* [1]. It would be absurd, to make the divine Attributes the rule of interpreting Scripture, and yet to take our notion of those Attributes from the same Scripture: for that would confound the rule, with the thing to be tried by it: and like travelling in a circle, instead of carrying us forward, would bring us onely to the point, from which we set out. The want of attention to this maxim, and the rashness of interpreting

[1] Heb. xi. 6.

the

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the Sacred books, without any just conception of the Deity, has given birth to all those senseless doctrines and Hæresies, which have disturbed and disgraced the Christian Church in all ages.

For example ; the literal acceptance of *the Mosaic History of the Creation and fall of man*, by its seeming inconsistency with the characters of the divine wisdom and goodness, induced certain Hæretics of the Primitive Church, to assert *the existence of two Gods, or independent principles ; the one evil, the Creator of the world, and God of the Old Testament ; the other good, the supreme God and Father of Jesus* [1] ; while the same method of interpreting induced other *simpler Christians* also, as *Origen* tells us, *who honored the Creator, and thought nothing superior to him, to ascribe such things to him, as they would not believe of the most cruel and unjust of men* [2]. But neither those early Hæretics, nor simple Christians, could have fallen into such gross errors, if they had previously conceived and fixed in their minds, any rational notion of the nature of God. And in truth, there is not any part of the holy Scriptures, that has so much exercised the wit and invention of the Commentators, as this very History of the Creation, by the difficulty of reconciling it to the allowed attributes of the Creator.

I shall not enter into a particular examination

[1] *Iren.* l. i. c. 28, 29. *Origen.* *Philocal.* c. i. p. 6, 7, 21. *Tertull.* *Præscr. Hæret.* 40. [2] *Orig.* *ibid.* p. 7.

of

of all their various expositions : some of them will fall in our way in the course of this argument. All that I propose at present, is, to compare onely in general, the several merits of the two principal and rival kinds of interpretation, the one according to the Letter, the other to Allegory, which have each of them been approved and preferred in their turns, in different ages of the Church.

By the Letter, I mean the Historical acceptation of the text, as a plain narrative of facts, supposed to have been transacted in the very manner and order in which they are there related : by Allegory, I mean that latent and more refined way of delivering truth, under the dress of fiction, or fable, which was practised chiefly in ancient times, and by the Sages of the Eastern world.

Clemens of Alexandria, one of the most learned and inquisitive of all the Primitive Fathers, declares, “ that all, who treat of Theology, whether Greeks or Barbarians, have ever industriously involved the beginnings of things, by delivering the truth in *ænigma’s*, *symbols*, and *allegories*. That this *symbolical* manner of instruction was in particular esteem with the *Hebrews* as well as the *Ægyptians*, and that the *Greeks* borrowed it from *Moses*. That truth, under this veil of allegory, carries a more awful and majestic form. And that this kind of interpretation was of all others the most useful to true Theology, and piety, and “ the

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“ the sure proof of a superior wisdom and understanding [1].”

Eusebius observes, “ that the *Jews* were of two sorts, the learned and unlearned : that the latter of these, or the multitude, were subjected by *Moses* to the literal observation of his laws, as delivered in words : but the men of stronger minds were freed from that subjection, and trained to a more divine philosophy, and to penetrate into the hidden meaning. Agreeably to which distinction, he says, that they had public readers, or interpreters, called *Deuterotæ*, who explained the recondite and ænigmatical sense, not promiscuously to all, but to such only as were qualified to receive it.” All which he confirms by the authority of *Philo* and *Aristobulus*, and the constant practice of the *Essenes*, who followed this figurative manner of expounding, which, even in those days, was called ancient [2].

On the other hand, it is certain, that the literal interpretation of the first chapters of *Genesis*, has been a perpetual source of doubts and difficulties to the best Commentators ; and of railery and ridicule to the enemies of revealed religion in all ages. *Celsus*, the old adversary of the Gospel, laughs at the story of *Adam's formation*,

[1] *Stromat.* l. v. p. 658, *Aristobulus* is supposed to be the same person, who is praised in the 2d book of the *Maccabees*, c. i. x. Edit. Oxon.

[2] *Præpar. Evangel.* l. viii. x. xi. it. l. xi. v. This

and

and of Eve made from his rib ; of God's commands to them both ; and of the Serpent opposing and eluding the effect of those commands, as an absurd old woman's tale : where Origen, in answer to him, observes, *that he does not act fairly, but dissembles, what he ought to have signified, that all this was to be understood in an allegorical sense ; not giving his reader the words themselves, which would have put him in mind that they were spoken figuratively.* Yet Celsus himself owns, on another occasion, *that the reasonable and moderate both of the Jews and Christians were ashamed of these stories, and endeavoured to turn them into an Allegory* [1].

Origen retorts likewise his own cavils upon him, by shewing, “ that there were much sillier
“ stories among their own writers, both Poets
“ and Philosophers, of which he gives several
“ instances from *Hesiod* and *Plato*, which were
“ all allegorized by their interpreters to a moral
“ sense ; and he urges it as unreasonable, to deny to the Jews, and to their Legislator *Moses*,
“ what was allowed to all other nations, *the possession of truth under the veil of mystery* [2] :” in which reasoning he pursued the principles of his master *Clemens*. *Julian* also, after rallying, as *Celsus* had done, the particular articles of the same story, says, *that unless it be considered as a fable, of a secret and mystical sense, it is full of great blasphemies against God* [3].

[1] Cont. Cels. p. 186, 187.

[2] Ibid. l. iv. p. 189.

[3] Julian Oper. & Cyril. contr. Vol. ii. l. iii. p. 93, 94. Ed. Lips.

It

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It is commonly objected by the Naturalists, that the *Mosaic* account of the creation, if considered onely according to the letter, cannot possibly be reconciled to physical truth, or to the nature of things. *Eusebius* says in excuse for it, that it was not *Moses's* intention, to give a philosophical account of the formation of the world, but to signify onely, that it did not exist of itself or by chance, but was the production of an all wise and all powerful Creator [1]. *Cyril* makes the same reply to the scoffs of *Julian*, that *Moses's* view was, to accommodate his story to the ignorance of the Jews; not to reason accurately on the origin of things, but to shew, that there was one God who created them all [2]. Others, who contend for the necessity of allegory, are more severe upon the literal meaning.

Pbilo calls it a piece of rustic simplicity, to imagine, that God really employed the labor of six days in the production of things [3]: in which he is followed by *Origen*, *Austin*, *Ambrose*, &c. "What man in his senses, says *Origen*, will believe, that the first, second, and third days, and the evenings and mornings passed without sun, moon, and stars? and the first even without the heavens? who so silly as to think, that God, like an husbandman, planted a garden, and in it a real tree of life, to be tasted by corporeal teeth; or that the knowledge of good and ill was to be acquired by eating the

[1] *Præpar. Evangel.* l. ii. 7. [2] *Vid. Julian. Oper.*
ibid. p. 50. [3] *Vid. Sixt. Senenf. Biblioth.* l. v. p. 338.

"fruit

“ fruit of another tree? And as to God’s walk-
“ ing in that garden, and *Adam’s* hiding himself
“ from him among the trees, he says, no man
“ can doubt but that these things are to be tak-
“ en figuratively, and not literally, to denote
“ certain mysteries or recondite senses.”

He contends also, that in some parts of the *Mosaic* history, “ there are interspersed certain
“ absurdities or impossibilities, on purpose to
“ draw us away from the mere pleasure of the
“ narration, lest by finding nothing in it worthy
“ of God, we might apostatize from the true
“ doctrine, and being unmoved by the letter,
“ learn nothing divine from it [1].”

It would be tedious to collect the strange variety of conceits, which have been invented, about the single article of a Paradise. One main argument against the reality of it is, the ignorance in which all ages have been, concerning its place and situation. Its being guarded so strictly by a *Cerberus* and *flaming sword*, if it be understood literally, necessarily implies, that, after the expulsion of *Adam*, it was accessible still to man. Yet, if it had actually subsisted in any part of the Eastern world, it is hard to conceive, why, from the time of *Adam’s* expulsion, there should not be the least mention of its place or situation, in the records of those Antediluvian ages : since *Adam* himself was not probably far removed from it ; and his posterity at least, upon their increase and dispersion from

[1] Orig. Philocal. c. i. p. 12, 13.

each

each other, must needs have been planted and settled on all sides of it.

After the deluge indeed, and the universal change, which is supposed to have been made by it on the surface of the earth, it is not strange, that its place and remains could not any where be discovered, notwithstanding all the pains, inquiries, and even voyages of the curious in quest of it : among whom I find none so adventurous as an Abbot of our own Island, named *Brandanus*, who is celebrated in Monkish story, for sailing round the world in search of it [1]. Yet it is certain, that it could never have been in any part of this terrestrial globe, if what the Primitive Fathers declare concerning it be true, that it was the place, *into which Enoch and Elias were translated, and into which St. Paul also was caught up, in the third heaven : which Irenæus affirms, to have been taught by the Apostles, and delivered to him by those ancient men, who had been their disciples* [2].

But there is not a single article of this narrative of the Creation, which, in its literal sense, has not puzzled all the expositors, and furnished the Sceptics with perpetual topics of ridicule. In answer to whom, I have never met with one advocate of the letter, either ancient or modern, who has ventured to affirm the whole to be rational and natural ; or has not been forced to

[1] Chytr. *Onomastic. Bibl.* p. 798.
c. 5. p. 405. *vid. not.* 4.

[2] *Iren.* l. v.

take

take shelter under Allegory, in one part of it or the other.

Josephus, in the Præface of his Jewish Antiquities, tells us, “ that their Legislator, *Moses*,
 “ had dexterously involved some things in ænig-
 “ ma’s, delivered others with dignity in Alle-
 “ gories, and literally explained, whatever was
 “ proper to be directly proposed : which to
 “ those, who are disposed to search into the cau-
 “ ses of each, will afford much contemplation,
 “ and of a kind truly philosophical. That the
 “ purpose of his Antiquities was, to set forth
 “ onely the literal and historical part ; but if
 “ God prolonged his life, he would endeavour
 “ to explaine the other parts also.” And in
 the first chapter of his book, he clearly signifies,
 “ that the story of the Creation was of the alle-
 “ gorical kind :” for after a brief abstract of the
 first day’s work, given in the words of *Moses*,
 he adds, “ I could now explaine the cause of
 “ this, but since I have promised to give the
 “ causes of all in a separate volume, I will de-
 “ fer the interpretation of it to that time [1].”

Philo actually performed what *Josephus* pro-
 mised ; and has largely explained all the allego-
 ries of the Mosaic law ; and, in a particular
 treatise *on the formation of the world, according to*
Moses’s account of it, he says, “ these are not
 “ fabulous tales, such as the poetic and sophistic
 “ tribe delight in, but figurative descriptions,
 “ leading us to allegorical and recondite senses ;

[1]. Vid. Antiqu. Jud. Procem. &c. i. p. 5. Edit. Haverc.

“ to

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“ to which, if any one rightly and rationally at-
 “ tends, he will aptly call the serpent the em-
 “ blem of pleasure. First, because, being with-
 “ out feet, he lays his whole stress upon his
 “ belly : 2dly, because he makes the clods of
 “ earth his food : 3dly, because he carries poi-
 “ son in his teeth, which destroys all who are
 “ bit by him : all which noxious qualities be-
 “ long also to the voluptuous man [1].”

St. *Austin*, in the preface to his twelve books,
 of *the literal interpretation* of the three first chap-
 ters of *Genesis*, says, “ the question is, whether
 “ all these things are to be understood onely in
 “ a figurative sense, or to be embraced and de-
 “ fended by the rule of historical faith, as things
 “ which were really transacted. For that they
 “ are not to be understood figuratively, no
 “ Christian will dare to say, who recollects,
 “ that the Apostle declares, *how all those things*
 “ *happened to them in a figure*, and recommends
 “ that which is written in *Genesis*, *these two shall*
 “ *be one flesh*, as a great mystery, relating to
 “ Christ and the Church [2].” On the subject
 of *Paradise* also, he tells us, “ that there were
 “ three opinions about it, which were in a man-
 “ ner general : one of those, who interpreted it,
 “ of a corporeal or material *Paradise* : another
 “ of those, who understood it onely, of a spiri-

[1] De Opific. Mundi Se- pienda figuraliter, nullus
 cund. Moyf. Op. T. i. p. 38. Christianus dicere audebit,
 Ed. Lond. &c. De Genes. ad literam,

[2] Nam non esse acci- l. i. c. i.

“ tual one : and a third of those, who considered
 “ it in both those senses ; sometimes in a cor-
 “ poreal and sometimes in a spiritual ; and this
 “ third opinion, he says, was that which pleased
 “ him [1].” Wherefore, after he had given
 the allegorical interpretation in another part of
 his writings, he professes in these twelve books,
 to explaine the same things, according to their
 historical truth ; yet, even here, is frequently
 driven back again to Allegory, or as oft as he
 found himself unable, he says, *to accommodate the*
text to a proper and literal sense [2].

But this double way of interpreting, which
Austin here approves, and the Moderns generally
 follow, by considering one sentence as literal, the
 next as allegorical ; one part as a fact, the next
 as a fable ; seems to be absurd and irrational ;
 tending rather to confound than enlighten the
 understandings of men ; and was contrived,
 without doubt, for no other purpose, but the
 support of systems and prejudices, which plain
 scripture would not justify, till it was dressed up
 and seasoned, as it were, by a mixture of senses
 which did not belong to it. Fables indeed may
 be grounded on things real and true : and a

[1] Tres tamen de hac re
 quasi generales sunt senten-
 tiæ, &c. Ibid. l. viii. c. 1.

[2] Et quia non mihi tunc
 occurrebant omnia, quemad-
 modum proprie possent ac-
 cipi, magisque non posse accipi
 videbantur. aut vix posse, aut

difficile ; &c.—Ib. l. viii. c. 2.

Tota ista sententia figurata
 est. Ib. l. xiii. c. 36.

Hæc quoque in mulierem
 verba Dei, figurate & prophe-
 tice multo commodius intel-
 liguntur. Ib. c. 37.

general notion of such truths may be artfully conveyed under the veil of fiction or Allegory: but historical and allegorical narrations are compositions of quite different kinds, and serving to different ends: the one to represent, by a literal description, the true and natural state of things; the other, to inculcate some hidden truth, quite different from what it literally represents. It seems impossible, therefore, that two such opposite characters, which naturally destroy each other, can belong to the same subject; or that one and the same description can, by any art or mixture of senses, be rendered both truly historical and allegorical at the same time.

From these authorities and reflections, I have ever been inclined to consider the particular story of *the fall of man*, as a moral fable or allegory; such as we frequently meet with in other parts, both of the Old and New Testament, in which certain religious duties and doctrines, with the genuine nature and effects of them, are represented as it were to our senses, by a fiction of persons and facts which had no real existence. And I am the more readily induced to espouse this sense of it, from a persuasion, that it is not only the most probable and rational, but the most useful also to the defence of our religion, by clearing it of those difficulties, which are apt to shock and make us stumble, as it were, at the very threshold.

For whether we interpret the story literally or
allego-

allegorically, I take it to be exactly the same, with regard to its effects and influence on Christianity ; which requires nothing more from it, than what is taught by both the kinds of interpretation, *That this world had a beginning and creation from God ; and that its principal inhabitant, man, was originally formed to a state of happiness and perfection, which he lost and forfeited, by following his lusts and passions, in opposition to the will of his Creator.* For there could not be any religion at all, without the belief of such a Creator, nor any need of a reveled religion, but upon the supposition of man's fall. These two points, then, as the ancients observed, are all that *Moses* proposed to deliver to us ; and they are delivered with equal truth and efficacy, either in the literal or the allegorical way : nor do I find any reference to them in the sacred Scriptures, which appears to be inconsistent with the allegorical acceptance of them.

Have ye not read, says our Saviour to the *Pharisees*, *that he who made them at the beginning, made them male and female ? and for this cause shall a man leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh* [1]. He takes no notice of the particular manner of *Eve's* formation, from the rib of *Adam* ; but intimates onely in general the fact of their creation and the moral of it, which is equally deducible from the literal and the allegorical sense. *St. Paul* seems to allude indeed to the circum-

[1] Matt. xix. 4. Mark x. 6.

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 stance of the rib, where he says, *that the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man : and that Adam was first formed, and then Eve* [1] : whence he infers the subordination of the female sex. But his argument, whether it be drawn from the letter or the allegory, would have the same force, since it is supposed, that the allegory itself was contrived for the purpose of suggesting the same inference. Again, *I fear*, says Paul to the *Corinthians*, *lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ* [2]. Where he seems to unfold the true meaning and hidden sense of the *Mosaic* parable, and to signify, that *Eve* was beguiled and seduced from her native simplicity, by the carnality of her lusts and affections. For as that was certainly the case of the *Corinthians*, so the Apostle's simile would not be pertinent, unless we take the serpent, as many of the learned have done, to be the *symbol of lust and sensual pleasure*.

The book of *Job*, according to the most probable opinion, is nothing else but a kind of *Fable*, or *Poetic Drama* ; designed to inculcate the certainty of a divine Providence ; the duty of patience in afflictions, and of submission to the will of God under all his dispensations, how severe or afflicting soever they may happen to be. This was the sense of the most ancient and learned *Jews*, who had no clear account or probable tradition concerning either *Job* himself,

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 8. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 3.

or

or the author of the book: which some impute to *Moses*, some to *David*, some to *Isaiab*, or to one of the later Prophets; while others suppose it to have been written after *the Babylonish captivity*: yet all of them seem to think, that *Job* himself, if such a man ever really existed, must have lived in the times of the Patriarchs. But, be that as it will, it is evident, that every part of the book breathes a dramatic and fabulous air: *the council of Angels convoked by God; the appearance of Satan among them; his debate with God, and commission received from him; the several speeches of Job and his friends*: the conclusion of the whole, by the apparition of God himself in a whirlwind; and all this, as the critics observe, delivered in verse, make it highly probable, or certain rather, that it was intended, as I have said, for an instructive or *moral Drama*. Yet we find it referred to, and applied by *Ezechiel* and *St. James*, in the same manner as if it were a real history [1]; because its moral or doctrinal part could not fail to have the same effect in the one way as in the other.

I cannot however omit one argument for the reality of its historic character, which was wanting, as I observed above, to the case of *Paradise*. For though the place of *Paradise* could never be discovered in any age, by the most laborious searches of the curious, yet *St. Chrysostom* assured us, “ that it was common in his days “ to undertake dangerous voyages by sea, from

[1] *Ezech.* xiv. 14. *Epist. Jam.* v. 11.

“ the

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“ the remotest parts of the earth, *to visit Job's*
 “ *dunghill in Arabia*, and, upon sight of it, to
 “ kiss the ground, which that holy champion
 “ had stained with the blood of his ulcers, more
 “ precious than any gold ; and from which they
 “ received, he says, infinite benefit, and much
 “ philosophical instruction [1].”

The case is the same with the parables of our Saviour. For example ; the parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, is delivered in so lively and affecting a manner, as to have given rise to a dispute, both among the ancients and the moderns, whether it be a fable or true history, or mixed and compounded of them both [2]. (But in what way soever it be taken, it yields the very same fruit to us) and all the interpreters, from the time of its publication to this day, have been drawing from it, as from a real history, many excellent lessons both of faith and practice. St. *Chrysostom*, in four several Homilies, harangues upon it, as a perpetual source of instruction to all conditions of men ; and though he treats it as a proper parable, yet he makes this reflection on the whole, *That advice and admonition have the surest effect, when we see the riotous chastised and punished, not in words onely, but in fact and reality* [3].

To conclude ; since it is allowed to have been the practice of all the sages of the ancient world,

[1] Chrysost. Oper. T. ii. p. 59. Edit. Benedict. docuit, neminem oportere deliciis uti, &c. Iren. l. iv. c.

[2] Non autem fabulam retulit nobis pauperis & divitis. Sed primum quidem 3. Vid. Not. 2.

[3] Chrysost. T. i. 719.

in treating of the origin of things, and the sublime doctrines of theology, to wrap up what they delivered, under the veil of *Ænigmas*, *Symbols*, and *Allegories*; and since this was more peculiarly the custom of the *Egyptians*, among whom *Moses* was born, and diligently trained in *all the mysterious parts of their learning and wisdom*; it is reasonable to imagine, that on the subject of the Creation, and the origin of man, he should use a manner of writing, which all other nations then used, and which his masters the *Egyptians* had particularly taught him. This, I say, is what we should previously expect from such a writer, on such a subject; and this is what we find him to have actually performed, as it is evident, as well from the turn and manner of his writing, as from the testimony of those very people, for whose instruction he wrote; who generally treat these first chapters of *Genesis* as allegorical, and are said to have restrained their youth from reading them, on account of the difficulties of the literal sense, and the wrong notions which it might imprint of God, till they had reached a maturity of age and judgement, which might qualify them to comprehend its more recondite meaning. The Christians also, when they received these books from the *Jews*, received from them at the same time, this same method of expounding, which they universally followed in the primitive ages: and on the authority of such guides, it cannot surely be thought rash, or give any just scandal, to adhere to the same interpretation;

tation ; especially, since it will be found, as I have said above, the most effectual of all others, to clear our religion from those objections, which in all ages have shocked the faith of many, on their very entrance into it.

End of the SECOND VOLUME.

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